

**GETHSEMANE LUTHERAN
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

Parent Handbook

2022-2023



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WHO WE ARE

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is designed to meet the emotional, social, physical, cognitive, and spiritual needs of children through a variety of activities and experiences. Gethsemane Lutheran Children's Ministry (GLCM) extends the mission of the church into the community through sharing the love of God. The GLCM program is designed to meet the needs of children through an inclusive preschool program that offers a wide variety of activities and experiences while providing an environment which emphasizes the basic Christian values of love, trust, peace, cooperation, and respect. GLCM is a safe and affirming environment that promotes acceptance of all children and families. The GLCM program supports families and children who may need additional accommodations, to include home language, special needs/differing abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

WELCOME

Welcome to Gethsemane Lutheran Children's Ministry (GLCM). The staff and Advisory Board of GLCM pledge their care and concern for each child enrolled, and are grateful for the opportunity to provide this educational and care-giving experience during your child's early years. The staff of GLCM are trained professionals who take great pride in the work they do. Maintaining professional and open communications between staff and parents ensures the best possible care for all students at GLCM. Please help by doing your part to communicate regularly with your child's teacher in a professional and courteous manner. Please take the time to read and understand the following policies. These guidelines explain GLCM operations and rules and are designed to ensure the safety and well being of each child enrolled. Compliance with all policies and standards is required. It is important that GLCM's rules and policies are read and understood to ensure that all parents and children have a rich and rewarding experience at GLCM. If, after reading the policies, there are any questions or comments please address them to the GLCM Director.

This guide to Gethsemane Lutheran Children's Ministry is provided for the sole use of the parents and children enrolled in the various programs. Since it is a stated purpose of the program to facilitate the children's growth and development, the assigned classrooms may change throughout the year as the children's growth necessitates movement into more challenging environments. These policies are intended as a guide and are reviewed annually. Policies may be updated with written notice.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Gethsemane Lutheran Children's Ministry (GLCM) extends the ministries of the church into the community through sharing the love of God. The GLCM program is designed to meet the needs of children through an inclusive preschool program that offers a variety of activities and expressions while providing an environment which emphasizes the basic Christian values of love, trust, peace, cooperation and respect. GLCM is a safe and affirming environment that promotes acceptance of all children and families.

The objectives of the GLCM program are:

- To create a happy and secure environment for each child.
- To encourage children to develop a positive attitude toward learning, teachers, and others.
- To encourage good listening and verbal skills.
- To provide play activities which aid in growth and development.
- To encourage growth without pressure.
- To encourage development of problem-solving abilities and creativity.
- To help each child develop a positive self-image, acknowledging that every child is a special creation of God.

ADVISORY BOARD

GLCM is a non-profit outreach ministry of Gethsemane Lutheran Church. The Advisory Board includes members from the church as well as GLCM parent representatives and community members. The director and assistant director of GLCM and the associate in Ministry of Congregational Life serve on the Board in a non-voting capacity. The GLCM By-Laws are available in the director's office for review upon request.

STANDARDS

A. Licensing

GLCM is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), who sets the minimum standards by which any child care center operates. These standards are available upon request for review.

B. Accreditation

GLCM has obtained accreditation from:

- Texas Rising Star Program through WorkSource Childcare Solutions
- Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA)

C. Non-Discrimination Policy

GLCM does not discriminate against any child because of race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, and political or religious belief. All reasonable attempts that are within the capabilities of staff will be made to accommodate any child with special needs without compromising the needs of the other children. While the orientation of GLCM is undeniably Christian, it is recognized that families participating in the program come from a wide variety of religious backgrounds. The GLCM program is offered not as a means of indoctrination, but in the context of respect for the basic human dignity of all persons, regardless of differences. Forms and information for filing an official complaint for violation of individual civil rights is available in the GLCM office.

CURRICULUM

Educational Philosophy: The educational philosophy of *Gethsemane Lutheran Children's Ministry* is based upon Developmentally Appropriate Practices and the guidelines of the Texas Rising Star Program with Worksource Childcare Solutions. At *GLCM* we believe that children learn through play. Each classroom is designed to motivate play in four basic areas of learning: *language development, motor development, cognitive development, and social-emotional development*. Staff take time each day to insure that, in addition to self-directed, intrinsically motivated play, the children will spend time in small and large group activities which may be self-directed or teacher-directed. The teacher's role in the classroom is one of facilitator, and to offer insight to the parents on the child's routine and developmental progress. Teachers at GLCM use the developmentally appropriate curriculum of Emergent and Little Texans, Big Future. GLCM's curriculum aligns with Early Learning and Pre-Guidelines.

GLCM uses Teaching Strategies for assessments each fall and spring to track the developmental progress of our students. GLCM uses Teaching Strategies to assess each and every child's individual developmental skills as children move at their own pace. Teaching Strategies is used as a tool to help build class lesson plans on individual needs of the children.

Program Objectives:

- To create a happy and secure environment for each child.
- To encourage children to develop a positive attitude toward learning, toward teachers, and toward others.
- To encourage good listening and verbal skills.
- To provide play activities which aid in growth and development.
- To encourage growth without pressure.
- To encourage development of problem-solving abilities and creativity.
- To help each child develop a positive self-image, acknowledging that every child is a special creation of God regardless of culture, faith, or race.

Multicultural Anti-bias Program: In addition to the above, GLCM has a commitment to help each child learn to respect the environment, all living things, and the diverse people in our world by using a variety of multicultural and anti-bias activities including learning centers, enrichment programs, and special projects.

Parental Involvement: As their child's first and primary teacher, parents are an integral part of *GLCM* education. To create the best experience for your child, the parent/teachers relationship is of great importance. We like to develop curriculum for your child based on their needs, interests, and abilities. To do this we rely on parent input. At the same time, we share with the parents their child's progress through conversations, daily sheets, conferences, and evaluations. Regular communications with staff regarding concerns or suggestions are expected. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in their child's school life. Classroom involvement should include: visits in the classroom, attendance on fieldtrips, lunch with the class, and volunteering for class projects. Parents may also volunteer to be classroom parent representative or help the Advisory Board on its' various committees. Parents and staff working together will insure the best possible education for each child.

ACTIVITIES

Children learn through play. GLCM uses age and developmentally appropriate activities for all children. For more information about activities for your child's age group, see the separate sections for Infant/Toddler and Preschool programs at the end of this handbook.

GLCM is aware of the need for physical activity and limited screen time. We follow licensing protocols and limit screen time to under 1 hour per day of short videos which pertain to a thematic unit and computer time during free choice time. All screen time must be listed within the teacher's lesson plans for that week. GLCM children are not to bring any handheld devices to school. All children 2 years of age and younger have zero screen time during the day.

For information in regards screen time, a great screen time resource for parents can be found at: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Where-We-Stand-TV-Viewing-Time.aspx>. This program provides families with resources specific to screen time usage and young children that may include age-appropriate apps and information on concerns about screen time usage, setting limits and restrictions, and how to monitor their child's usage.

All classes have scheduled outdoor/gym time to work on gross motor skills and exercise through play. Infants are scheduled for 1 hour of outside time per day. All children 12 months and over will be given 90 minutes of outside time per day.

During summer months ALL classes participate in "Splash Day" activities. The Water Activity Authorization on the Enrollment Agreement must be signed for your child to participate.

THE SCHOOL DAY

GENERAL INFORMATION

GLCM provides full and part time childcare for children from age 6 weeks to 5 years, Pre-K. Children are grouped in classes by chronological and developmental age. Each class uses materials and activities which are developmentally appropriate for its age group. Children are assessed and placed by their developmental stage as well as by birth date. GLCM takes pride in maintaining a low staff to child ratio. The following guideline is well below Minimum Standard ratios and may vary from 1-2 children.

GLCM Enrollment Guidelines

AGE	Staff/Child ratio	Group Size
Infant (1-11 months)	1:4	8
12-17 months	1:5	10
18-23 months	1:6	10
2 year olds	1:8	12
3 year olds	1:10	15
4 year olds and older	1:15	20

Hours of Operation

GLCM is licensed to operate from 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents are asked to please respect the scheduled hours. Any emails or other forms of communication sent after business will be addressed on the next business day. A Late Pick-Up Fee is assessed for full-time children picked up after 6:00 p.m. Part-day care hours are 7:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or MDO 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Late fees for part-time enrollment are charged for times after the registered pickup time.

For incidents of late pickup a fee of \$5.00 for every five-minute increment will be applied. Further incidents of late pick up will incur the same penalties plus an additional fee of \$10. Chronic late pick-ups may result in termination of enrollment.

GLCM is closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Martin Luther King Day	Juneteenth	Friday after Thanksgiving
President's Day (Teacher Workday)	July Fourth	Christmas Eve
Good Friday	Labor Day	Christmas Day

In addition, the center will be closed 2 days for staff training/workdays in August of each year and early release (12:30 pm) the day before Thanksgiving. The Center will provide advance notice to parents.

NOTE: If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, GLCM will observe the Friday before or the Monday after as a holiday and the center will be closed (with the exception of July 4th). At least two days will always be observed at Christmas regardless of the day of the week.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

Upon enrollment, parents will complete the following forms:

- Enrollment Agreement
- Physician's Statement
- Current Immunization Records (with stamp and/or signature of Physician)
- Special Needs Form (if applicable)
- Child's History Form
- Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization
- Tuition Agreement Form
- Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep (for children under 12 months of age)
- COVID-19 Questionnaire Forms

DAILY ITEMS PROVIDED BY PARENTS

Sheets: All children (other than infants in the Monkeys and Dragonfly classrooms) need a labeled bottom sheet to cover their sleeping mat for rest time (a crib sheet fits the mat well). If your child is walking, please send a top cover to keep your child warm during nap times. The teachers will keep these items in your child's cubby or individual baskets. We ask that you please take home all belongings at week's end for laundering.

Clothing: Please send in a labeled extra change of clothes that are appropriate for the season. We do play outside every day, so please have your child dressed accordingly for the day's weather. Make sure your child is wearing shoes for easy movement. Flip-flops, cowboy boots, raining boots, and slick-bottomed shoes often cause children to fall when running outside, and limit their play.

Water: You must send in a water bottle labeled with your child's first and last name. It will be kept in your child's individual space for your child to drink throughout the day and as well as offered at all snack and meals. This water bottle must be taken home and replaced with a clean water bottle every week.

PARKING AND DRIVEWAY USE

To ensure the safety of our children and all members of the GLCM community, it is of utmost importance that we practice safety and courtesy while in the parking lot and obey the posted signs year-round. Please watch out for others, drive slowly, and hold the hands of your young children.

ONE-WAY traffic only in the parking lots. For entrance to GLCM, please enter via Wonsley Dr and exit onto Georgian Dr.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Upon arrival all children must have a health check conducted. This can be as simple as a visual or a verbal assessment done by a teacher regarding the child's night, behavior, appearance, appetite etc.. It is always helpful for parents to volunteer information regarding any markings such as bruises or scratches, abdominal disturbances such as vomiting, diarrhea, constipation or any other uncharacteristic behavior pertaining to their child. Please do not leave your child in a classroom until the health check has been completed.

All children are to wash their hands upon entering the classroom. Hand sanitizers are located outside of every classroom for parent use to minimize the spread of illness.

Parents/Guardian must bring children in to their teachers in the morning, and come in for them at the end of the day. Parents **MUST INITIAL** children **IN** and **OUT** on the class roster. Children will be allowed to leave **ONLY** with their parents or others authorized on the Enrollment Agreement. GLCM will enforce custody arrangements as stated in a court ordered document. A copy of the order must be in the child's file, prior to enrollment.

Sometimes leaving your child in the morning is difficult. Please say good-bye quickly with a hug, even if there are tears. The staff pay special attention to children who need reassurance and help them adjust into happy play after parents leave. At pick up time children are excited to share their day with whomever comes to pick them up. Please be courteous and respectful of your child and finish telephone conversations prior to picking them up.

ABSENCES

If you know your child will be absent for the day please notify the office as well as the your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible. Please also make all parties involved know of any planned vacations or longer term absences. Discounts/prorated tuition will not be given for absences.

CHANGE IN PICK UP PERSON

If someone other than those authorized on the Enrollment Agreement is to pick up the child, notification must be given to the GLCM office in writing or by telephone, in advance. Anyone other than parents or usual designated adults must present a driver's license or other identification before GLCM releases the child. Please notify the GLCM office of changes in regular pick-up routines.

THE SCHOOL YEAR

2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Please see the 2021-2022 GLCM School Calendar on the GLCM website: glcmchildcare.org.

Paper copies of the school calendar are available in the school office upon request.

COMMUNICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Parents keep your contact information up to date. Please email the office at glcm@glcmchildcare.org in order to keep the office informed of any new contact information and how we can best reach you during the working day.

GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATION

Parents are expected to receive, read, and respond (if needed) to all communication from the school. Information and communication will be sent to both parents on file. Teachers cannot and will not act as a mediator between parents.

REMIND ME 101

Remind Me 101 is a great way to stay up to date on current events via text messages. Remind 101 is a text service that will send out urgent notifications, such as inclement weather closings or fun school spirit events. If you'd like to receive these texts, you can text "@msglc" to 512-961-4703. The Remind 101 service only allows for GLCM to send text messages to parents, and will not display your personal number. You can opt-out any time by texting "unsubscribe @msglc" to the above number.

EMAIL

Much of the communication within your classroom and from the administration will be done by email, including information newsletters from your child's teacher as well as the office. Please let your child's teacher, office staff and/or room parent know if you need to use another form of communication or if you need to update and/or add email addresses. Your email address will be used to send informative messages and send out surveys. When an email is sent to all parents, your email address will be on the BCC (Blind Carbon or Courtesy Copy) line to protect your email address. Gethsemane Lutheran Children's Ministry will not share your email address with any third party and will not use email for sensitive or time-critical information. Room parents are given email addresses for all the parents in the class to communicate relevant class-related information and do not need to use BCC.

PHONE CALLS

If you need to get a message to your child's teacher during the school day, please call the office. A staff member will be sure to deliver your message. After regular business hours, please leave a message on the office voicemail, and your phone call will be returned the following business day.

GLCM WEBSITE

The GLCM website is a great source for overall information about the school, including an updated school calendar, community news, and links to the GLCM Facebook page. The GLCM website also contained detailed information that is specific to GLCM's program. As an informed parent, please stay familiar with our web contents as well as our Facebook page.

PUBLICATIONS

Newsletter: A monthly school e-newsletter sent by the office staff at the beginning of each calendar month. Includes: dates to remember, upcoming events, monthly menu, and monthly school-wide calendar.

Classroom Newsletter: Your classroom teacher will send you a monthly e-newsletter as well as a paper copy to keep you informed on details specific to your child's class.

Daily Sheets: Your classroom teacher will send home daily sheets every day when your child is in attendance in order to keep you informed on the details specific to your child's day such as potty training, daily food/liquid intake, fun happenings in the classroom as well as overall demeanor for the day. **You have been added to these email lists, please contact the office if you are not receiving any of them or would like to update your email address.**

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A bulletin board outside the office displays information about GLCM's Mission as well as the monthly happenings such as a menu, calendar, and newsletter.
- Each classroom has its own bulletin board for news specific to its students and parents.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled in both the Fall and Spring of each year; please consult the school calendar for exact dates. GLCM tries to schedule conferences over multiple days for each conference cycle for classrooms, so that parents have ample time to spend with their child's teacher.

Each Fall and Spring, one conference per child is scheduled - even if a child lives in more than one household. Parents who wish to meet with teachers for conferences need to meet on these scheduled conference days and take responsibility to sign up for a conference time when Sign-Ups are emailed out. Teachers are not obligated to reschedule missed conferences for a family who does not attend due to recreational reasons (vacations), neglects to sign up for a conference in advance, or does not show up for their scheduled conference and does not provide a reason for their absence. If parents are unable to attend a conference due to circumstances beyond their control, they should notify their child's teacher as well as the office as soon as possible to reschedule.

Please let staff know if problems arise with the child at the center or at home. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the center's activities. Suggestions and comments about the program are welcomed.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

VOLUNTEERING

The Staff of GLCM view themselves as partners with parents in meeting each child's individual needs. Because GLCM is a non-profit center, parents will be required to commit time, talent, and monetary resources to the children's ministry program. The fundraising activities of the center are a part of budgeted operating expenses of the center and are not "extra money." Participation by parents in these activities is very important and is essential in keeping tuition affordable.

PARENT, GUARDIAN, AND GUEST VISITS

Parents are welcome to observe their child at any time without prior approval. Parents are also invited and encouraged to join in class activities during the day. Classroom volunteering is a wonderful way to share your child's world. Arrangements can be made directly with the teacher(s). Please remember that class time cannot be used for a lengthy discussion on individual children. Parent-Teacher conferences should be scheduled in advance.

TUITION AND FEES

TUITION

Tuition is due on the first day of each month and considered late after the 5th business day of the month. Arrangements for late payments should be made by talking with the director. Checks should be made payable to GLCM. No post dated checks are accepted. A current tuition and fee schedule is available from the office.

To maintain a budget based on enrollment, tuition refunds or waivers cannot be given for sickness, vacations, inclement weather closings or other absences. Tuition will be assessed on the first day of attendance or within two weeks of enrollment availability, whichever is earlier. If you choose to take an extended vacation or absence without payment, your child will be considered withdrawn and will not be guaranteed a space upon return.

Workforce Capital Area Solutions is available to parents that are interested in services, wanting to sign up for CCS waitlist, or need to make changes. For more information on financial aid services please visit austinccs@wfscapitalarea.com.

ENROLLMENT FEES AND SUPPLY FEES

Waitlist Fee: A \$25 non-refundable fee is required in order to be placed on the GLCM waiting list for placement. This amount will be applied to the registration fee upon enrollment.

Registration Fee: A \$80 non-refundable fee is due at the time commitment is made to enroll. This fee will be waived for Gethsemane Lutheran Church members.

Enrollment Deposit: An enrollment deposit will be collected upon enrollment. This deposit will be applied to the final two weeks' tuition with 30 days written notice of withdrawal. The deposit will be forfeited unless 30 days notice of withdrawal is received in writing in the GLCM office.

Supply Fee: A supply fee will be charged annually. This fee is due every September. Newly enrolled students will be charged a pro-rated amount based upon their date of enrollment.

TIMELY PAYMENT OF TUITION AND FEES

Late Tuition Fee: For an initial incident of late payment of tuition, the following fees will be applied: \$5.00 per working day is assessed after the 5th business day of the month. Any tuition not paid by the 20th of the month will result in restriction of attendance and may result in your child's withdrawal. Tuition mailed in must be received by GLCM by the 5th of the month. Further incidents of late payment of tuition will incur the same \$5.00 per day penalties plus an additional fee of \$10.00. Chronic late payments may result in termination of enrollment.

Returned Check Fee: A \$25.00 fee will be assessed for any returned check. In addition, a \$5.00 per working day fee will be assessed effective the date of the return.

Illness Pick up Fee: Children who become ill while at the center must be picked up promptly within the hour the parent is contacted. A late pick up fee is charged if your child remains at the center after one hour past the time a parent was contacted. The fee is \$5.00 for every five minute increment after the parent fails to pick up the child within one hour of being notified.

POLICY FOR EXITING PARENTS

When withdrawing from the Center, **30 days written notice** to the GLCM office is required to qualify for any tuition or enrollment deposit funds. Supply and registration fees are non-refundable. When the office receives the official 30-day notice, parents will be asked to fill out and return a GLCM Withdrawal Form. If a refund is due, arrangements with the office for reimbursement must be made by the parent before the child's last day. As we are non-profit, many families choose to donate deposits or tuition refunds back to the Center as a gift in their child's name, for which we are always grateful. Please allow 30 days for the office to process and mail your refund. Once a child has withdrawn from the Center, we will not be able to honor requests for refunds.

SCHOOL POLICIES

NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

GLCM provides a hot lunch, morning snack, and afternoon snack. Menus are distributed in the monthly newsletter as well as posted on bulletin boards in the hallways. Copies are also made available to take home. GLCM strives to make all meals and snacks nutritionally sound and appealing. Sweet treats are limited. No artificial sweeteners are used. Fruit juices do not have sugar added and are 100% juice. Milk for children up to 2 years of age is organic whole milk and for children 2 years and older will be organic 1% milk.

GLCM follows the Dietary Guidelines for Americans established by the USDA when preparing the monthly menu. This ensures that children are provided with a variety of foods with different colors and textures to include whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables.

If a child has a food allergy or sensitivity, parents must notify the GLCM office as soon as possible to ensure that the food is removed from the child's diet. A special needs form will need to be completed and a note from the child's doctor may be required. Children who have special diets due to food sensitivities, vegetarian meals, religious practices, etc. are to be provided by parents.

All foods provided by GLCM for lunch or snacks are commercially prepared or prepared in-house in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials. Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of reach of children. Staff members are educated on food allergies and take precautions to ensure children are protected. Upon request, information about foods that may cause allergic reactions is available for parents in the office. A child could be allergic to any food, but these common allergies account for 90% of all reactions in kids: milk, eggs, peanuts, soy, wheat, tree nuts (such as walnuts and cashews), fish, and shellfish.

Staff does not reward good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind. Milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home. Foods brought from home can be placed in classroom refrigerators to maintain safe temperatures. Each classroom is also equipped with a microwave and food may be warmed in microwave as needed.

For those bringing food from home: We feel strongly that good food is both your child's health and also positively influence their energy while at school. Please only send in food that has nutritive value and does not contain sugar as a primary ingredient (when in doubt, check the labels; you might be surprised). Inappropriate foods include candy, soda, cupcakes, cookies, pudding, etc. Any outside food brought in from home to share must be commercially prepared or inspected by local health officials.

It is important to us that every child eats nutritious meals while in our care. We are committed to serving whole, unrefined, natural foods as much as possible. Please honor our Nutrition Policy when packing your child's lunchbox. If your child does not have a healthy lunch, GLCM will offer your child healthier options provided by the school. We understand that finding foods that your child will eat can be a challenge; therefore we are providing some healthy suggestions:

- ⇒ **Vegetables** - Please provide at least one vegetable with your child's meal. Suggestions include: carrot sticks, celery with cream cheese, peas in a pod, sweet pepper slices, cucumbers, tomatoes, broccoli, and salad greens.
- ⇒ **Fruits** - Please provide at least one type of fresh or dried fruit. Fruit rollups and chewy fruit snacks are not considered fruits. Apple, orange, mango, peach, avocado, watermelon and cantaloupe slices are favorites with the kids. They also enjoy strawberries, raspberries, grapes, cherries, and blueberries.
- ⇒ **Main Course** - These should include whole grains (bread, rice, pasta, etc) and proteins (beans, tofu, meat, fish, eggs). Some children prefer small amounts of many foods to a larger portion of one food. Please ask for suggestions if you are having trouble finding something your child will eat.
- ⇒ **Other Snacks** - Crackers, yogurt, pretzels, sesame sticks, edamame, additional fruits and vegetables, cheese cubes or sticks, pickles, granola bars, etc.

For additional information on nutritional guidelines as well as many more ideas and options for health meals and snack, please check out myplate.gov. Please limit your child's consumption of the following goods: Pop-Tarts, Jell-O, sugary granola and cereal bars, chips, etc. Most children make these items the focus of their meals and refuse to eat their more nutritious snacks.

Breastfeeding: GLCM has designated two areas for breastfeeding (one in each building). The sleeping area in the Infant Room and the staff/conference room in the office building are appropriate areas for breastfeeding. Both rooms are equipped with rocking chairs and privacy. We ask that breastfeeding be limited to these areas and not in the classroom as it may be disruptive to the other children. Upon request, a compilation of breastfeeding education and support resources are available in the office.

HEALTH POLICIES

Medical Reports: A record of immunizations and a physical examination within the past 12 months must be completed and on file at school before the first day of school. Records should also include any screenings, prescribed medications, descriptions of any impairments and current chronic health conditions. GLCM requires all these forms to be completed before the child may attend school. All children are required to be immunized or to have a notarized medical or religious exemption on file in the school office. Non-immunized children might be prohibited from attending school if any outbreak occurs which they have not been immunized.

Immunizations: All children must have current immunizations. Other requirements are set by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission and are available from the director. Immunizations are available at the Austin-Travis County Health Department and the City of Austin Health Clinics. Immunizations are required within 30 days of your child's birth date unless otherwise waived by a physician or other legally recognized exemption. In the cases of exemptions due to reasons of conscience or religious beliefs, GLCM must be provided with an original exemption affidavit which must be signed by parent/guardian and have the seal of a Notary Republic.

Employees of GLCM and others who come in regular contact with children (including but not limited to teachers, interns, and volunteers) should receive vaccinations as recommended for adults by the Center for Disease Control. Caregivers have the right to an exemption from this policy because of medical conditions identified as contraindications or precautions by the CDC or for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. Per TDFPS Minimum Standards Immunization Policy, employees must provide (a) documentation of immunizations and updates as appropriate **or** (b) a signed and dated statement of exemption. One of these documents must be provided within 30 days from the date of hire.

Administration of Medicine: Parents must fill out and sign a medical permission form in order for a staff member to give medicine to a child. This form must give a date, dosage as stated on the original bottle, and a time of administration. If it is a prescribed medication, the doctor's prescription must be affixed to the medicine and staff will, at all times, and follows the doctor's prescription - even if the parent is requesting something different. Your child's name must be indelibly written on the medicine. The medications must be locked up while in school. When medication must be administered over a long period of time, a new Medication Authorization Form must be completed by the parent every 2 weeks. When chronic conditions are diagnosed, a standing medical order from the physician is required.

All non-prescribing medications prescribing medications, including topical ointments such as diaper ointment, insect repellent, and sunscreen can only be administered with the authorization of a parent in writing, signed and dated. Authorization for non-prescribed medications needs to be updated annually.

Vision and Hearing Screening:

All children turning four years old and/or entering Kindergarten the following September must have a vision and hearing screening. The screening may be performed by a physician or clinic, or it may be done at the center for a minimal fee. Vision and hearing screenings are offered each Spring. A copy of the screening results must be provided to the center director within 120 days of your child's 4th birthday or enrollment.

Oral Health Resources:

Annually during Dental Health month in February, GLCM students are visited by a local pediatric dentist to educate our students on proper oral health and practices. Students and families are provided with oral health resources to include a tooth brush, floss, as well as information on how to properly brush teeth, and when to visit the dentist. GLCM has provided parents with a list of local pediatric dentistry offices under on Dental Services pg. 26 of the Parent Handbook. Another great resource for parents can be found at <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/default.aspx>. This resource provides parents with additional information on oral health.

Health Benefit Resources: GLCM families are provided with information about obtaining medical, dental, vision, and life insurance benefits. Parents can find great resources at <https://www.texaschildrenshealthplan.org/what-we-offer>. Finding the right health plan for your children and family is important. Texas Children's Health Plan offers coverage for children through CHIP and STAR Medicaid. Most CHIP families pay \$35 per year or less to cover all their children. Medicaid is free for children who qualify. Texas Children's Health Plan also offers health coverage for pregnant women and adults. If interested or needing more information on your health care needs, please check out the website above.

Health Rules for Attendance: Children should be kept home from school if they are feverish, have diarrhea, are vomiting, have dark mucus, nasal discharge, or if they show signs of becoming sick (listlessness/drowsiness, productive cough, sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge). **See exclusion criteria for more information below.** GLCM realizes that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your own children.

Exclusion Criteria for Illness and Communicable Diseases during a non-pandemic (COVID-19): In order to protect all children enrolled at the center, children must be kept home, or will be sent home if already in attendance, if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

Condition	If your child has been diagnosed with this disease, our program will:	When to allow child to return:
Chicken Pox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the sick child from child care Notify all parents regarding possible outbreak Contact the local Health Department if needed to find out the preventative measures to take Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	Approximately 6-7 days after the rash begins or when ALL blisters have scabbed over
Diarrheal Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the sick child from child care Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	When child is diarrhea-free for 24 hours
Hand-Foot and Mouth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclude if child has open, draining lesion on hand or has lesions in the mouth and is drooling. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	When lesions heal or drooling ceases
Head Lice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude from child care 	24 hours after treatment and no signs of nits or lice
Ringworm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child if lesions cannot be covered Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	If unable to cover the lesion, after treatment begins and the lesion starts to shrink
Strep Throat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from child care Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	24 hours after antibiotics have begun and 24 hours fever without the use of fever-reducing medication
Pink Eye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child with eye drainage and itching Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	24 hours after the first dose of medication and symptoms are mild
Fifth Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude the child from child care if the child is unable to participate in center activities or has a fever Program will notify all parents Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	After child is able to participate in center activities
Impetigo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude child from child care Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures 	After child has been fever-free for 24 hours without medication
Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude child from child care if child has a fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit orally, or above 100 auxiliary 	After child has been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication
Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily exclude child that has had 2 or more vomiting episodes in a 24 hour period 	After the child has not vomited for a 24 hour period

If the child has been exposed to or has contracted a communicable disease, parents must notify the child's teacher or the director. This information is required by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. Parents will also be notified if children have been exposed to a communicable disease while at GLCM.

Children who become ill while at the center must be picked up promptly within the hour, by the parent when called. Center staff determines illness by the child's symptoms, appearance and behavior; parents are called only when it is believed necessary for the well-being of all. A late pick up fee will be charged if the parent fails to pick up the child within one hour of being notified.

COVID-19: GLCM's current COVID guidelines for exposure and quarantine time states:

- If a child under the age of three is exposed, they may return to school after a five day quarantine and a negative antigen or PCR test that is administered by a healthcare provider or testing center (no home tests) on the sixth day after exposure. If the test result is negative, the child may return to GLCM immediately. If the family forgoes testing, then the child must fulfill full ten day quarantine and may return on the eleventh day after exposure.
- If the child is three or older and can properly wear a mask for the duration of the school day, the child must quarantine for five days and then may return to school on the 6th day after exposure. The child must continue to wear a mask for the following four days. No test is necessary to return.
- If a child of any age is fully vaccinated and the GLCM office has a copy of their vaccination card, quarantine and mask wearing is unnecessary and the child may return to school immediately.
- If a child of any age has had a documented positive COVID case within the past 90 days that was administered by a healthcare professional (no home tests) then the 90 day immunity rule becomes effective. Once GLCM has been provided with the healthcare or testing centers' official documentation of the positive test results, the student may return immediately with no quarantine or mask wearing necessary.

GLCM holds the right to temporarily close classrooms and/or the center and seek to follow current health guidelines if any child and/or employee have tested positive for COVID-19. During a COVID Public Health Emergency parents will not be permitted to enter the facility beyond the designated drop-off and pick-up area. This procedure is for the safety of all persons present in the facility and to limit to the extent possible everyone's risk of exposure.

In order to enter upon the facility premises children must be free from COVID-19 symptoms. If, during the day, any of the following symptoms appear, the child will be separated into a designated area/room until a parent is able to pick them up. The parent will be notified immediately and they must pick up their child from the facility within 1 hour of being notified.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| • Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher | • Rash on the torso and/or groin |
| • Consistent Cough | • Bloodshot eyes, without crusting |
| • Shortness of Breath | • Bright red, swollen lips |
| • Chills | • Swollen lymph nodes |
| • Loss of taste or smell | • Swollen hands and/or feet |
| • Sore Throat | • Red palms and soles of the feet |
| • Muscle aches | |

While GLCM understands that many of these symptoms can also be related to non-COVID-19 issues we must proceed with an abundance of caution during this Public Health Emergency. **Children will need to be symptom free without any fever-reducing medications for 24 hours and at times must provide a doctor's note before returning to the facility.**

Children are required to wash their hands using CDC recommended hand-washing procedures throughout the day using warm running water and rubbing with soap for at least 20 seconds.

Parents must provide extra clothes for their child in a labeled zip lock bag. Children's blankets must be able to fit into their appropriate bins and/or cubby space outside their classrooms. All bedding and belongs will be sent home at the end of each week in order to be properly washed and returned.

Parents must immediately notify the GLCM office if they become aware of any person with whom their child or themselves that have had contact with and/or exhibits any of the symptoms listed above. Parents will adhere to self-isolate, quarantine, as well as get tested for COVID-19 if needed for their children and/or themselves.

Parents must understand that while present in the facility each day, their child will be in contact with other children, families and employees who are also at risk of community exposure. They must understand that no list of restrictions, guidelines or practices will remove 100% of the risk of exposure to COVID-19 as the virus can be transmitted by persons who are asymptomatic and before they show signs of infection. Parents will understand that they play a crucial role in keeping everyone in the facility safe and reducing the risk of exposure by following the practices outlined herein. Parents will not hold GLCM responsible for any unforeseen circumstances, such as coming into contact with COVID-19.

Parents will certify that they have read, understand, and agree to comply with the provisions listed herein. They must acknowledge that failure to act in accordance with the provisions listed herein, or with any other policy or procedure outlined by GLCM, will result in a termination of enrollment. Parents must acknowledge that their child's enrollment will be terminated if it is determined that their actions or lack of action unnecessarily exposes another employee, child, or their family member to COVID-19.

Hand Washing: Hand washing greatly cuts down on the transfer of germs. We ask that all children, adults, and staff wash their hands with soap immediately upon entering school in the morning and from outside play. We also wash our hands before and after eating, before and after water play, after working with any manipulative, and other sensory materials, and after toileting, nose blowing, finger sucking, or touching of any contaminated objects of surfaces.

Toilet Training: GLCM staff understand that learning toilet learning is a highly individual matter and that children learn at different ages, in their own time. Toilet learning is a partnership between children, parents and teachers. Parents are encouraged not to start too young, and to be patient and forgiving with the inevitable accidents. Let teachers know when the child shows signs of readiness, and tell the staff what words are being used in reference to toilet learning so consistency is maintained. Teachers will observe children to ensure they are developmentally ready to care for their toileting needs independently. If frequent accidents occur, teachers will work with parents to develop a plan to best meet the needs of individual children and their community. An information sheet on toilet training is available from your child's teacher or the office.

Bodily Fluids: Caregivers must follow universal precautions outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) when handling vomit, urine, or other bodily fluids that may contain blood including:

1. Using disposable, non porous gloves;
2. Placing gloves contaminated with blood, vomit, or urine in a tied, sealed, or otherwise closed plastic bag and discarding them immediately.
3. Discarding all other gloves immediately after one use; and
4. Washing hands after using and disposing of the gloves.
5. Clean affected area/surfaces with a soap and water solution, water, and then a bleach solution. Let air dry.

If any child's bodily fluid comes into contact with any other child, their parent will be notified immediately.

Recording and Reporting Accidents: All injuries involving bumps to the head, bleeding; broken bones, and/or requiring medical treatment are recorded. An incident report is also filled out, and parents are informed of the injury/accident. The report is signed by the GLCM staff member completing it and is kept in the child's student file. Copies are given to the parent and director.

Emergency Medical Authorization: All GLCM First Aid and CPR training, which is routinely updates. In the event of an emergency concerning your child, the school will first contact you, the parent, and then, if necessary, the backup emergency contacts. If the emergency requires immediate medical care, we will call for an ambulance while we are contacting you. Every parent must sign an emergency medical authorization. This is authorization to secure emergency medical treatment for the child if parents cannot be reached. In serious emergencies, children will be taken to the closest emergency room. Parents should routinely leave phone numbers where they can be reached during program hours, if they differ from those on file. **Regular phone numbers on the Enrollment Agreement must be kept up-to-date at all**

times. Please report changes in your contact numbers to the GLCM office as they occur.

Special Needs: Children with significant or chronic health care problems such as allergies, asthma, epilepsy, or reactions to food or insects, developmental or physical delays or challenges, or ongoing therapeutic treatment should have these listed on the Enrollment Agreement as well as on the Special Needs form. Parents are encouraged to work with the director and staff to provide information and support for the child's care. Ongoing communication between center staff, parents and other relevant professionals (therapists, doctors, etc.) in these cases is particularly important.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND POOR WEATHER CONDITIONS

If AISD classes are canceled due to weather, or if the Director believes remaining open would jeopardize the safe travel of children or staff, the center may be closed. Once closed, the center will remain closed the rest of the day. In cases of AISD delayed openings, GLCM will open at 11:00 a.m. This is due to staff traveling from various school districts and counties. Start time will also depend on property condition; ice on the parking lot, sidewalk, etc. Under these conditions, the center **may** remain closed the entire day. Please plan to make alternate arrangements.

GLCM will take the following steps to ensure clear communication in the event of a possible closure:

1. Once we are aware of approaching bad weather, signs will be posted on doors alerting parents.
2. GLCM will send email to parents early in the day giving parents a "heads up" on a possible closure.
3. A message will be left on the office answering machine (512/339-6335) stating the opening time or if the center will be closed.
4. We've also set up a texting service through Remind101 to send out urgent notifications, such as inclement weather closings. If you'd like to receive these texts, you can text "@msglc" to 512-961-4703. The Remind101 service only allows for GLCM to send text messages to parents, and we can only see your name, not your number. You can opt-out any time by texting "unsubscribe @msglc" to the above number.
5. We will also post details on inclement weather closings on Facebook - www.facebook.com/GLCMChildcare

If none of the above answer your questions, please email the director at glcm@glcmchildcare.org.

Please note: GLCM will not "make up" any inclement weather day closings.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The center has developed emergency procedures covering a variety of weather and other emergencies.

- Communication between buildings and classrooms is possible via two-way radios, cell phones, land lines, and intercoms.
- In the event of an emergency that poses an immediate threat to the children or the facilities, such as a fire, the children and staff will be evacuated and escorted by GLCM staff to pre-designated safe locations on the premises. Fire drills occur once a month.
- In the event of an emergency that precludes outside evacuation, such as a tornado, the center will initiate storm drill procedures in which children are moved to safe locations within the buildings. Storm drills occur quarterly.
- Lockdown procedures have been established and will be initiated in the event that children must remain in their classrooms for safety. Lockdown drills occur quarterly.
- Once the area is secured and circumstances permit, parents will be updated using the best available method (i.e. email, telephone, recorded message on the GLCM answering machine, local media, etc.).

Emergency Preparedness Plan

1. Evacuation, relocation, and shelter/lock-down of children including:
 - a. The first responsibility of staff in an emergency evacuation or relocation is to move the children to the Gethsemane Lutheran Ministry House at Georgian Dr. at 206 E. Wonsley Dr, Austin, TX 78753.

- b. The children will be evacuated and/or relocated to the designated safe area or alternative shelter lead by their teachers. All children unable to walk with be transported via emergency evacuation cribs.
 - c. The staff are responsible for sheltering/lock-down emergency for the orderly movement of children to their designated locations outlines in their evacuation plans posted on the wall or behind the door in each individual classroom.
 - d. An emergency evacuation and relocation diagram is also placed on the wall or behind the door of each individual classroom.
 - e. Name and address of the alternate shelter is the GLCM Ministry House at 206 E. Wonsley Dr, Austin, TX 78753.
 - f. Children in attendance at the time of emergency will be accounted for by a head count by the teacher and recounted by the director with a solid confirmation from their attendance book.
2. Communication, including:
- a. Emergency telephone number is the Director's cell phone number of 512-925-1573
 - b. We will communicate with local authorities (such as fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department, parents and licensing via telephone and email when appropriate.

Fire and law enforcement: 911

Health Department: 512-776-7111

Licensing: 512-834-3402

RemindMe101: 512-961-4703

3. Staff will evacuate and relocate with the essential documentation including:
- a. Parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child in care
 - b. Authorization for emergency care for each child in care
 - c. The child tracking system information for children in care.
4. Staff will continue to care for the children until each child has been released by their parents or legal guardian on file.
5. GLCM will reunify the children with their parents as the evacuation, relocation, or sheltering/lock-down is lifted. GLCM will make contact with parent and legal guardians through phone calls, emails, as well as a RemindMe101 text.

Catastrophic Events Procedures: Though the possibility of a serious event that could endanger people in a wide area (i.e. poisonous fumes, flood, or explosion) is minimal, GLCM is prepared nonetheless. If a problem arises, the Emergency Management Office of Austin will set up a command post and the following procedures would be implemented:

- 1. The Austin Fire Department would go door to door to inform everyone within the affected area and evacuate if needed. They will work with Capital Metro or make other arrangements to provide transportation of the children and staff to a shelter.
- 2. The Center will post signs on the doors notifying parents where the shelter is and how to reach it. If the area is blocked off, we will notify emergency crews as to our location.
- 3. Emergency shelters provided by the city are not named until an emergency occurs and are determined by the time of year, time of day, and amount of space needed. The Center has made arrangements with T.A. Brown Elementary School, 505 Anderson Lane to go to their facility until children can be picked up or other arrangements can be made.

Throughout the year, all classes participate in regular safety drills. Fire Drills will be conducted monthly. Storm Drills will be conducted every three months (quarterly).

ANIMALS AT THE CENTER

Some children may be allergic to pet dander therefore, GLCM will inform parents in writing when animals are or will be present in the child-care center. This will allow parents to decide whether to prohibit or allow their child to have contact

with the animals. Any animals that visit the center will be required to show documentation of vaccinations or have a statement of health from a local veterinarian.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found items will be kept inside the office for a limited time. Items not claimed will be donated to charity at various times throughout the year. Please be sure to label all of your child's personal belongings.

CELL PHONE USE

- Our classrooms are a "cell phone free zone"
- Take and make phone calls outside the school building
- Use cell phones away from school building doors and windows; ringtones and voices travel
- Ensure that your phone will not ring or vibrate loudly during meetings, events, gatherings, etc.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

Positive Discipline Philosophy: GLCM believes that discipline must be individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self control, a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following: using 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, redirecting behavior using positive statements, 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.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. The goal is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and re-directing their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior.

The GLCM guidance policy stresses positive techniques including:

- redirection,
- anticipation and elimination of potential problems,
- positive reinforcement,
- problem solving techniques,
- Encouragement rather than competition, comparison or criticism.

The child's self-respect is maintained at all times. When appropriate, older children will have "time-away" from their normal activities to calm themselves and consider the appropriate behavior. Time-away is of a short duration away from the group.

Discipline CANNOT be:

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet

- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.

Child development research supports that physical punishment such as pinching, shaking or hitting children teaches them that hitting or hurting others is an acceptable way to control unwanted behavior or get what they want. Children will also mimic adults who demonstrate loud or violent behavior. Rapping, thumping, popping, yanking, and flicking a child are all examples of corporal punishment. Consistent, clear rules are explained to the children, and any guidance is given in a timely manner and is appropriate to the behavior. Corporal punishment, humiliation, or other harsh or frightening methods of guidance ARE NOT used or tolerated at GLCM.

Involuntary Withdrawal:

When the actions of a child in the classroom become disruptive to the class over a period of time, the teacher will make every effort to discover the causes and to redirect the child. If these efforts are not successful, the parent will be requested to meet with the teacher. Together the parents and teacher will work on action to be taken at school and at home. After a reasonable time, if these efforts are not effective, professional assessment and/or intervention may be requested by GLCM. GLCM staff will cooperate with all professionals and parents to work for a positive outcome. If after a reasonable time all efforts are not effecting a positive change, or if at any time parents are not cooperating with staff, the child may be requested to withdraw.

Protocol for Aggressive Acts:

As children become more verbal and gain self-control, GLCM encourages them to resolve conflicts with words rather than aggression. All aggressive behavior is taken seriously and staff actively work to redirect behavior and eliminate triggers for aggression. Children who hit or bite require a team effort among parents and teachers to understand the causes and eliminate the behavior. Please stress to your child that aggressive behavior is not acceptable.

If your child is hit or bitten by another child at GLCM, the staff will reassure the hurt child, treat the injury (if necessary), and redirect the aggressor.

Adult Conduct: As the adult leaders of our community, GLCM staff and parents should model cooperative conduct in all situations. We also urge all parents and other adult members of our educational community to understand and support the philosophy and methods of our discipline policy, the essential goal of which is to resolve conflict by education rather than punitive means, using democratic processes which support the inherent dignity and rights of every individual.

If any member of the GLCM community shows repeated disrespect towards other members of our community, including the use of abusive language or gestures toward a child, teacher, or staff member, and/or an unwillingness to mediate a solution or to resolve a conflict situation using respectful steps. GLCM reserves the right to ask the family in question to leave the school and terminate the family's enrollment with GLCM.

PROCESS FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCERNS

The GLCM program provides an enriching opportunity that is designed to complement the lives of children and their families. Both the staff and the families we serve must recognize that the school and home should be connected with one another. This beneficial and continuous relationship is defined by mutual trust, respect, clear communications, and commitment to efficient conflict resolution. Through the relationship between GLCM and the families we serve, we are able to provide a setting that best meets each child's growth needs within the context of group care.

Decisions of the GLCM Director are based upon these policies and are final. A parent may appeal to the GLCM Risk Management Committee only in a situation involving a child's removal from the GLCM program. However, civil rights or abuse grievances are governed by federal or state law and are not subject to the timeframes stipulated in this policy and may be appealed to the Advisory Board at any time

Grievance Policy: If there are grievances with a member of the GLCM community, the following steps should be followed. This policy applies to all types of grievances.

Step	Process	Time Frame
1	Contact the person with whom the grievance is with in a direct, respectful and timely manner. Grievances should be reported within a week. It is expected that the parties work out their differences by taking turns listening carefully to each other, explaining their understanding of the issues, and exploring resolutions that are possible and acceptable to both parties. Parents having concerns about their child are encouraged to discuss these with the child's primary caregiver or lead teacher. The parties are encouraged to resolve the issue through this route if possible.	Contact within 1 week
2	If the issue is not resolved with Step 1, then the individual with the grievance may bring the grievance to the attention of the GLCM Director by completing a Grievance Form . Grievances must be received within <u>30 days of the incident</u> . The director and individual will work together to come up with a resolution. The director will provide written documentation of the resolution to the individual within 2 weeks. The director has final responsibility for resolving grievances.	Contact made within 30 days Resolution provided within 2 weeks
3	If the grievance relates to violations of policies, regulations, or laws, and the individual believes the director has not resolved the issue, then the individual should make a written grievance on the Grievance Form to the Advisory Board Risk Management Committee (ABRMC) <u>within 2 weeks</u> . The ABRMC will provide a written response to the individual <u>within 30 days of grievance filing</u> outlining their recommendation to the Director and to the Senior Pastor at Gethsemane Lutheran Church. The ABRMC only has the authority to make recommendations to the director and ultimately, the director maintains final responsibility for resolving grievances.	Contact made within 2 weeks of receipt of director's written resolution Receive response from ABRMC within 30 days of filing

Another avenue for dealing with problems is to contact the Child Care Licensing Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. This agency deals with complaints about violations of the Texas Minimum Standards for Licensed Day Care Facilities and allegations of child abuse.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Slide and Tunnel:

1. Always use the stairs to get to the top; do not climb back up the slide
2. Slide sitting up and feet first.
3. One person at a time.
4. Do not block the bottom of the slide.
5. Slides are for people only - not toys, rocks, etc.

Monkey Bars:

1. Objects may not be used to reach the monkey bars.
2. One person at a time.
3. Do not hang upside down.

Bridge:

1. Keep bridge clear from toys and debris.
2. Children may run, skip, or hop across the bridge. Do not jump in one place on the bridge/
3. Stand while on the bridge

Gardens and Natural Objects:

1. Walk in garden paths. Do not climb in or over garden beds or walls.
2. Treat living plants kindly. Do not pull off leaves, branches, or flowers.
3. Always ask permission before harvesting or weeding the garden.
4. Keep all ground cover (pebbles, mulch, etc.) in its designated area of the playground.
5. Do not throw rocks, nuts, mulch, or sticks.

Riding Toys:

1. Riding Toys may be used on the playgrounds and pathways with teacher supervision.
2. Do not crash into people or other objects.
3. Keep hands and feet on the riding toys when they are moving. Sit properly on seats.
4. Stop riding toys to allow others to safely walk past.

All toys and materials must remain in designated learning centers. Shoes must be worn at all times. All Gates to remain closed and latched. Weapons, imaginary or otherwise, are not allowed at school.

REPORTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

When you choose licensed childcare, you join your child in new experiences and relationships. You and the childcare staff have a responsibility to protect the health, safety and well being of your child. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Licensing Division is part of this partnership too.

Their website is www.tdfps.state.tx.us or you may call **1-800-862-5252 for local licensing offices** and any other information you might need on childcare.

Another important number to have available is the **toll-free Child Abuse Hotline number at 1-800-252-5400**. The number is available 24 hours a day. State law requires everyone, including childcare providers, to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately.

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at Gethsemane are required by law to help the Department of Family Services become aware of the children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public, or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors; as well as preschool workers, are mandated reporters. Thus, it is policy of the Gethsemane Lutheran Children's Ministry to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DFPS/CPS immediately by telephone. Our school will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident.

All staff are required to attend one hour of annual training on Child Abuse and Neglect. Literature Brochures are available in the office for parents and staff to further educate themselves on the signs of abuse and neglect. Parents have access to the website and phone number of the CPS hotline in order to report suspected abuse.

Parents of the victim will be strongly encouraged to seek guidance through The Center for Child Protection (512-472-1164). This is the only non-profit in Travis County involved in the investigation of crimes against children. Together with law enforcement, Child Protective Services (CPS), medical professionals and prosecution, the Center works to ensure that a child's best interest is at the core of the investigative process.

CONCLUSION

GLCM's trained staff members are here to provide the children with warm, competent, high quality care. In partnership with parents, we strive to encourage each child's unique abilities and development. GLCM believes that GOOD BEGINNINGS NEVER END. Thank you for entrusting your child to this center's care during these most important early years.

INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM

Ages 6 weeks 24 months

I. ACTIVITIES

The GLCM program is designed for age and developmentally appropriate play. A variety of active and quiet periods are offered throughout the day. Outdoor play is part of the daily schedule (weather permitting). Infant and toddler activities are loosely structured following the children's individual development patterns. As they become developmentally ready, group activities and appropriate materials are introduced.

Language development and large motor skills are practiced daily. For older infants and toddlers, smaller manipulative toys and materials are introduced. All toys for this age group are scrutinized for safety and are large enough to prevent choking. Wading pools are used to splash in during the summer months. Birthday parties and holiday celebrations are also part of GLCM's program; parents are encouraged to work with the teachers in planning these.

II. EATING

Parents provide all food and formula for infants until they are ready for table food. GLCM provides bibs. Please label all bottles, baby food jars, and other food items with your child's name. Bottles must be capped. Food may be brought daily or weekly. Please give your child the breakfast feeding before arriving at the center.

GLCM provides a hot lunch and a morning and afternoon snack for children eating table food. Menus are posted monthly on hall bulletin boards. Please notify the director and your child's teacher of any special food needs. Also please let us know either in person or by calling in if your child will be absent so the center can plan accordingly for meals.

III. RESTING

GLCM provides cribs, sheets and other bedding for infants. Infants nap as needed. Toddlers, who are no longer sleeping in a crib while at school, may bring a small pillow, blanket, crib sheet for mat and "cuddly" for daily naptime. **ALL ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME MUST BE LABELED** with the child's name and taken home weekly for laundering.

Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep is followed by all staff, substitutes and volunteers. A copy is included in the Enrollment Packet.

IV. CLOTHES

Parents must provide diapers and wipes until toilet training is complete. Parents will be notified when additional wipes and diapers are needed. Families utilizing cloth diapers must provide a container with a lid or individual sealed bags for soiled diapers. Soiled diapers and/or clothing **MUST** be taken home daily.

Children should be dressed in comfortable, durable clothing suitable for outdoor play. Rubber soled shoes (sneakers) are best for walkers. Please leave a **COMPLETE** extra set of clothing, labeled with your child's name, in your child's cubby. Parents are asked to change these clothes seasonally. When used, clothing should be laundered and returned. If your child should get paint on any clothing, soaking with a stain remover as soon as possible should remove it. Jackets are needed on the playground, even on warm days. Mittens and caps are welcomed during the colder months.

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Ages 2 - 5 years

I. ACTIVITIES

The GLCM program is designed for age and developmentally appropriate play. Classes include child-directed activities in learning and play centers. A variety of active and quiet periods are offered throughout the day. Outdoor play is part of the daily schedule (weather permitting).

For ages 2 - 5, table games, puzzles, books, music and art activities are included in weekly units of study and discovery. Large motor and small manipulative toys and materials are used each day. The weekly schedule includes a Bible story and a 15-minute Friday chapel with the Pastor.

Special and optional activities are also provided. Additional Enrichment programs are offered and wading pools are used during the summer months. Birthday parties and holiday celebrations are also part of GLCM's program; parents are encouraged to work with the teachers in planning these.

Field trips are sometimes part of the weekly unit. Parents must sign the Transportation Authorization on the Enrollment Agreement for children to go on field trips. Notices are sent home in advance and parents are encouraged to participate. NOTE: Parents driving for field trips are welcome. Please ask the classroom teacher for the necessary forms to be completed before the trip.

II. EATING

GLCM provides a hot lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. Menus are posted monthly on hall bulletin boards. The morning snack should not take the place of a nutritious breakfast; please feed your child before coming to GLCM. Mealtime is a social learning time as well as a time of nourishment. Children are encouraged to taste everything, but they are not forced to eat. Please notify the director and the child's teacher of any special food needs. Also please notify the office either in person or by calling in if the child will be absent so the center can plan accordingly for meals.

III. RESTING

Children of all ages have a daily rest period after lunch. Children who have outgrown a nap are still expected to rest quietly. Children may bring a small pillow, blanket, crib sheet for mat and "cuddly" for naptime. ALL ITEMS BROUGHT FROM HOME MUST BE LABELED with the child's name and taken home weekly for laundering.

IV. CLOTHES

Children should be dressed in comfortable, durable clothing suitable for outdoor play. Rubber soled shoes (sneakers) are best. Please leave a COMPLETE extra set of clothing, labeled with the child's name, in your child's cubby. Parents are asked to change these clothes seasonally. If the child is learning to use the toilet, s/he has special clothing needs. BE SURE to bring several pairs of extra-thick training pants and plastic over-pants, labeled with the child's name. Extra sets of clothing are also particularly needed at this time. Diapers and wipes are still used at naptime until training is complete. When used, extra clothing should be laundered and returned. If your child should get paint on any clothing, soaking with a stain remover as soon as possible should remove it. Jackets are needed on the playground, even on warm days. Mittens and caps are welcomed during the colder months.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

FOOD ASSISTANCE

Organization Name	About	Contact Information
Food Pantry - Gethsemane Lutheran	Serves as a Central Texas Food Bank partner. All clients are entitled to basic rights set forth by the Food Bank	200 West Anderson Lane Austin, TX 78752 www.gethsemaneAustin.org
Central Texas Food Bank	Collects, houses, and distributes donated and reduced-cost food across Central Texas. Partners with agencies throughout Central Texas to distribute food to clients via the Wheels of Sharing Mobile Pantry, Fresh Food for Families, and HOPE Programs. Assists individuals in applying for state benefits. Hosts nutrition education, cooking, and breastfeeding classes.	6500 Metropolis Drive Austin, TX 78744 512-282-2111 www.centraltexasfoodbank.org

CHILD/YOUTH SERVICES

Organization Name	About	Contact Information
Dell Children's Medical Center	Comprehensive healthcare services include a broad range of support services including pediatric health, mental health, and safety of children.	4900 Mueller Blvd. Austin, TX 78723 512-324-8687 www.dellchildren.net
Helping Hand Home for Children	Provides a residential treatment program for children who are unable to thrive and remain safe in home setting.	3804 Ave B. Austin, TX 78751 512-459-3353 www.helpinghome.org

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Organization Name	About	Contact Information
People's Community Clinic	Provides the following health services for adults, adolescents, and children: Primary care (assessment, treatment, and prevention services)	1101 Camino La Costa Austin, TX 78752 512-478-4939 Austinpcc.org/our-programs/
Immunization Programs - Austin Public Health	Operates Shot for Tots/Big Shots Clinics. Maintains immunization records for adults and children who received shots at public health clinics in Austin and Travis County. Distributes free vaccines to local physicians through the Vaccines for Children (VCF) program.	15 Waller St Austin, TX 78702 512-972-5520 www.austintexas.gov/departments/health
CommUnityCare Health Centers *Multiple locations. Check website for locations near you.	Community Clinics throughout Austin and Travis County that provide primary care services. Select locations provide specialty care and women's health services/	512-978-9015 Communitycaretx.org/locations/

DENTAL SERVICES

Organization Name	About	Contact Information
CommUnityCare *Multiple locations. Check website for location near you	Provides dental services for adults and limited dental services for children. Offers dental health exams for infants as young as one year of age as part of the child's well medical checkup.	2901 Montopolis Dr. Austin, TX 78741 512097809955 www.Communitycaretx.org
Manos de Cristo	Operates a dental clinic providing low-cost comprehensive dental services	4911 Harmon Ave Austin, TX 78751 512-477-7454 Manosdecristo.org/dental

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Organization Name	About	Contact Information
Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service	Provides emergency financial assistance for rent (including rent for transitional housing), mortgage, gas (includes propane and firewood), electricity (NOT telephone), prescription expense, medical supply expense, diapers, and grocery store vouchers (for food only)	100 N. Interstate 35 Frontage Rd #2000 Austin, TX 78701 www.traviscountrytx.gov/health-human-services/divisions/family-support-services
Caritas of Austin	Provides financial assistance with rent for eligible people who have lived in their housing form a minimum of 30 days. Assistance with current month only	611 Neches Street Austin, TX 78701 512-472-4135 www.caristasofaustin.org

HOUSING AND RENT ASSISTANCE

Organization Name	About	Contact Information
Green Doors	Provides integrated supportive and affordable housing to individuals and families who have barriers to finding housing.	1503 S I-35 Austin, TX 78741 512-469-9130
Mediation Services - Austin Tenants' Council	Provides crisis intervention services for Travis County tenants to resolve emergency issues such as illegal eviction, lockout, utility shut off, or improper seizure of personal property. Provides advocacy and mediation services for low-income Austin tenants who have repair problems or conditions that pose a threat to their health and safety. Counselors will visit the property and assess the repairs.	1640-B E 2nd St, Suite 150 Austin, TX 78702 512-474-1961 www.housing-rights.org
Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation	Provides down payment assistance grant programs to help low income and moderate-income families and individuals purchase a home. Helps Texans stay in their homes by partnering with organizations that provide home buyer education, financial education, foreclosure prevention and home repair programs.	2200 East Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd Austin, TX 78702 512-477-3555 www.tsahc.org

MISC. BASIC NEEDS ASSISTANCE

Organization Name	About	Contact Information
Basic Needs, Employment, Public Health, and Social Services - Austin Public Health *Multiple locations. Check website for neighborhood center near you.	Offers a variety of basic needs, employment and social services. Basic needs services include a food pantry, senior nutrition programs, and assistance with forms/applications. May offer bus passes when available. Employment services include job readiness, placement assistance, assessment/goal setting, and training. Social services include case management, individual/family support counseling, and grief counseling.	
Basic Needs Services and Resources	Travis County partners with state and local organizations to offer basic needs services.	512-854-9020 www.traviscountytexas.gov/health-human-services/individuals-families/basic

Revised March 2022

Updated COVID Policies

Added Community Resources

August 2021

Updated Curriculum - PPM03

Updated Teacher Strategies