



# **Laurel Heights Weekday School Family Handbook 2024-2025**

**3 Months - Pre-Kindergarten**

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**Laurel Heights UMC Weekday School**

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**Laurel Heights United Methodist Church**

**Rev. Lisa M. Straus  
Senior Pastor**

## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Laurel Heights Weekday School Families,

Thank you for entrusting us with your children. Providing the best possible care and education for them during these early childhood years is our passion. Please read this handbook to understand more about our operational policies and procedures. Our office door is always open and I look forward to opportunities to get to know you better in the days ahead. Please don't hesitate to call or come by to speak with either Cassi, our Assistant Director, or myself anytime.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie Miracle".

Laurie Miracle  
Weekday School Executive Director  
[lmiracle@lhws.com](mailto:lmiracle@lhws.com)  
(210)732-6979

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# Mission Statement

Laurel Heights United Methodist Church Weekday School, a ministry of LHUMC, provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development of young children, ages 3 months to pre-kindergarten. The child's family, teachers, and the directors work together to make the child's experience a valuable and happy one. The school seeks to support the child's family by informing the family of their child's development, activities, behavior, and interactions with others, and to include the family as part of the educational team. To the best extent possible, each classroom is assigned a specific educational team of lead and assistant teachers who provide continuity of care for the children enrolled in that group. Continuity of care day-to-day provides children the stability needed for optimal developmental growth in all areas.

## Services for Students with Special Needs

The Weekday School recognizes that any child at any time may need accommodations due to family emergencies, divorce/separation, moving, illness, allergies, etc. The school requests that parents keep the Director and/or the classroom Lead Teacher informed of any situations that may be upsetting to the child or cause disruption in the child's regular routine or typical behavior. For students with allergies that require a F.A.R.E form or Asthma Action Plan, epinephrine, or other medications, the Director will meet with the family to discuss the plan and any accommodations needed. Observation and Assessment is provided and documentation of what is observed when there is a concern about a possible delay in development for a child. Observation and Assessment happen on an informal and formal basis. Anecdotal records of observations are made to provide educators data for concerns about a child's development. This data is shared with families during conference periods, but will be shared earlier if the educator has a concern that needs immediate attention. Meetings with families about developmental concerns will provide key information on suggested next steps, and diagnostic resources that are available within the community. The school will also discuss with parents and/or make appropriate professional referrals to parents with children who require further screening or assistance. For children who require any kind of therapeutic service on our school campus, the Director will need to

meet with the therapist prior to entrance to the classroom. For children who require any dietary considerations please provide a parent note in the child's enrollment packet outlining any dietary information. Parents will need to supplement any snack items for students who have allergies or dietary restrictions to snack menu items served at the Weekday School. We will seek to make all possible accommodations. If we are unable to meet the child's specific needs we will help refer the family to a program that would be more conducive to the accommodations.

## Operational Policies for Indoor and Outdoor Activities

<https://www.c-uphd.org/documents/wellness/weatherwatch.pdf>

Laurel Heights Weekday School provides Infants(3 months) through Pre-Kindergarten(5-years-old) opportunities for physical activity during indoor and outdoor play. Infants 12 months and under may engage in outdoor play for the amount of time that is tolerated by the infant. A minimum of two daily opportunities for outdoor play, weather permitting, in which a child may participate in large and small muscle activities. A minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous play for toddlers and 90 minutes for preschoolers. LHWS offers children the opportunity to engage in quiet and active play opportunities. All materials, supplies and equipment are available for children on their level and are age-appropriate. This provides children with the opportunity to learn independently and extend learning opportunities. The link above provides a chart that LHWS uses to gauge "weather permitting". This applies to hot and cold temperatures.

There are three playgrounds located at LHWS. **Playground #1** provides the Infants and Mobile Infants opportunities to crawl, climb, push, pull, walk, run, jump ect.. Playground time is provided at a length of time that is tolerated by the infant.

### **Infants Playground Time:**

**Infants** - 9:15-9:45 (Morning) 4:00-4:30 (Afternoon)

**Mobile Infants** - 10:15-10:45 (Morning) 3:30-4:00 (Afternoon)

The Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 classes use **Playground #1** and are allotted a 30 minute slot in the morning and the afternoon (weather permitting). The playground is equipped with props for infants and toddlers to use to engage in large and small muscle play.

### **Toddler Playground Time:**

**Toddler 1** - 9:45-10:15 (Morning) 4:30-5:00 (Afternoon)

**Toddler 2** - 10:15-10:45 (Morning) 3:30-4:00 (Afternoon)



During the Summer months infants and toddlers are provided water activities to engage in on playground #1 during the regularly scheduled outdoor time.. **NO SWIMMING POOLS.**

Toddlers are provided a motor skills time in the gym daily Monday through Friday from 8:30-9:00 (this time is subject to change to meet the needs of students but is always allotted a 30 minute interval). Towards the middle to end of the school year when toddlers are more familiar with the routine of walking together with their teachers they will engage in outdoor walks, weather permitting. Until toddlers are able to walk with their teachers they take buggy rides to observe and interact with nature. Infants are taken on buggy rides outdoors during the morning for 30 minutes and afternoon for 30 minutes(weather permitting). The scheduled times for the playground can change annually depending on the needs of the students. On days when the weather will not permit outdoor play and large motor movement, the infants provide music and movement within the classroom environment. Toddler 1 & Toddler 2 have Motor Skills in the morning, and may use the gym during the after school program for large, and small motor activities.

**Motor Skills:**

**Toddler 1 & 2 - 8:30-9:00**

**Afternoon Gym Time (When Weather doesn't permit outdoor activities)**

**Toddler 1 & 2 - 4:15-5:00 (T,W,F) / 4:25-4:45 (Th)**

**Playground #2** provides Group 1, 2, and 3 opportunities for preschool age children to climb, slide, ride bikes, scoop sand, and play outdoor instruments etc.. Children are provided many opportunities to engage in large and small motor skills.

**Playground Times:**

**Group 1 - 8:15-9:00 (Morning) 4:00-4:30 (Afternoon)**

**Group 2 - 9:00-9:45 (Morning) 4:30-5:00 (Afternoon)**

**Group 3 - 10:45-11:15 (Morning) 3:00-3:30 (Afternoon)**

During the Summer months the preschoolers are provided water activities to engage in on playground #2 during the regularly scheduled outdoor time. **NO SWIMMING POOLS.**

The Group 1,2, and 3 classes attend motor skills class Monday through Friday for a 30 minute interval: This time is subject to change to meet the needs of students but is always allotted a 30 minute interval.

**Motor Skills Class:**

**Group 1** - 9:45-10:15

**Group 2** - 9:00-9:30

**Group 3** - 10:15-10:45

**Afternoon Gym Time (When Weather doesn't permit outdoor activities)**

**Group 1** - 9:45-10:15 (Morning) 4:00-4:30 (Afternoon)

**Group 2** - 9:00-9:30 (Morning) 4:30-5:00 (Afternoon)

**Group 3** - 10:15-10:45 (Morning) 3:00-3:30 (Afternoon)

The preschool classes take nature walks (weather permitting), and engage in other games and activities. On days when the weather will not permit outdoor play and large motor movement, Group 1, 2, & 3 Preschool classes have Motor Skills in the morning, and may use the gym for 30 minutes during the after school program for large, and small motor activities.

**Playground #3** provides Group 4 & Group 5 Preschool students with opportunities to engage in large and small motor activities. Students have the opportunity to ride bikes, climb, slide, build with loose parts and mud kitchens, and experience gardening.

**Playground Times: (Subject to change depending on the needs of students)**

**Group 4** - 9:45-10:45 (Morning) 4:15-5:00 (Afternoon)

**Group 5** - 8:30-9:45 (Morning) 3:00-4:15 (Afternoon)

**Afternoon Gym Time: (Subject to change depending on availability & needs of students)**

**Group 4 & 5** - 2:45-3:30 (T,W,F) / 3:45-4:05 (Th)

During the Summer months the preschoolers are provided water activities to engage in on Playground #3. **NO SWIMMING POOLS.**

The Group 4 & Group 5 classes attend motor skills class Monday through Friday for a 30 minute interval G4: (this time is subject to change to meet the needs of students but is always allotted a 30 minute interval). The preschool classes take nature walks (weather permitting), and engage in other games and activities. On days when the weather will not permit outdoor play and large motor movement, Group 4 & Group 5 Preschool classes have Motor Skills in the morning, and may use the gym for 30 minutes during the after school program for large, and small motor activities

**Motor Skills Class:**

**Group 4 - 10:45-11:15**

**Group 5 - 11:15-11:45**

**After School Gym Time:**

**Group 4 & 5 - 2:45-3:30 (T,W,F) / 3:45-4:05 (Th)**

## Discipline and Guidance Policy

No form of corporal punishment will be used in the school. Administration, and educators use a positive guidance approach with children when they are displaying challenging behavior. Children are responded to in a calm, and respectful manner to ensure their social, emotional and physical safety. Positive discipline techniques, such as redirecting the child's attention in recognizing appropriate behavior, are used in the classroom. Short separations from the group (time outs) are used, if needed, and close contact with the parents/guardians is maintained so that solutions to continuing behavior problems are reached. All families sign a Discipline and Guidance Policy that is included in their child's enrollment paperwork. This policy outlines how our administrators and educators manage challenging behaviors with young children. This form is kept in the child's file in the office. The program will work with families and their children living with identified disabilities and modified learning, ongoing challenging behavior, or developmental needs by making developmental placement, adjusting staffing patterns or schedule, providing additional staff training, observing and assessing the behavior, providing positive strategies, create an individualized plan to address behavior, and/or making modifications within the physical environment. All of this will be done within reasonable limits. The reasonableness of the adjustments needed for the specialized needs of the individual child in addition to meeting the needs of all the children enrolled, will be seriously considered by the Director and/or the school board before making a final decision. The school may request that the parent share or fully cover the cost of any additional staff, specialized training, modifications to the environment and/or other adjustments needed to accommodate their child. If, after a period of time, the child is not benefiting from our program or is hindering others from benefiting from the program, a decision may be made to dismiss the child from Laurel Heights.

# Observation and Assessment

The purpose of assessment is to guide the teachers as they develop lesson plans for the school year. The teacher will use the results to amend the curriculum and adapt it for each individual child as needed. It is also used to assist in program growth by improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment.

Assessment is not meant to diagnose a child but rather to be informative in creating an individualized program. No one source of data will be used to make any decision regarding instruction or curriculum. It is possible that we may suggest that a child be referred for diagnostic testing, assessment, or developmental screening, when indicated. Individual, formal, and informal developmental screening occurs within the 1st three months of the child's attendance at Laurel Heights and continues throughout the year. Other forms of assessment such as observations, developmental checklists, drawings and writing samples, interest inventories, etc., will occur within the school or on the playground. The Lead Teacher is trained on how to administer the Brigance Screening through Curriculum Associates program.

Parents are asked to be part of the assessment process through conversation with the teacher, notes to the teacher and completing a parent questionnaire before parent/teacher conferences. A more complete picture of the child's developmental abilities is gained through this joint assessment between parent and teacher. The assessment results are presented in a written form twice a year and verbally at the parent/teacher conference. Informally, results are presented through notes home and at other points in the year. This assessment does not take the place of formal assessment by a professional evaluator.

The purpose of assessment is to guide the teacher as she develops lesson plans for the school year. The teacher will use the results to amend the curriculum and adapt it for each individual child as needed. It is also used to assist in program growth by improving curriculum and adapting teaching practices and the environment.

Assessment is not meant to diagnose a child but rather to be informative in creating an individualized program. No one source of data will be used to make any decision regarding instruction or curriculum. It is possible that we may suggest that a child be referred for diagnostic testing, assessment, or developmental screening, when indicated.

If the child speaks a language other than English, the Brigance Screening will be given in the child's primary language with the assistance of the parent or staff member who

speaks the language. Any questionnaire sent home will also be translated by either a family member or a staff member.

All assessment data is kept in the individual child's portfolio in a locked location within the classroom. The information is only shared with the child's parents/guardians, teaching staff, who are assigned to the classroom for that child, and with the school administration, unless permission is given to the school to share it with other parties.

## Philosophy of Curriculum Framework

Laurel Heights Weekday School is dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language, creative, and spiritual development of young children. The developmental domains are addressed daily in the classroom. The curriculum is sequential within the class and builds from one classroom to the next.

The primary language spoken in the school is English. Each classroom reflects the culture and language of the students enrolled in that class. Emergent literacy is offered in languages that reflect the students enrolled in that class specifically. Labels for common items are listed in English, and other languages specific to students in that classroom if English is not their first language.

The school incorporates child development knowledge to identify the range of appropriate behaviors, activities, and materials for a specific age group. This knowledge is used in conjunction with understanding the individual child's growth patterns, strengths, interests, family culture, needs, values, beliefs, home language and experiences to design the most appropriate learning environment. Therefore, the content and teaching strategies are both age and individually appropriate, within reason.

We place our highest priority on the social and emotional development of young children. When young children feel safe and learn how to interact with each other appropriately they grow and develop with confidence. This type of learning happens in a classroom setting where teaching staff and students are fully engaged in play together. It is our desire that every student leaves this school with a strong sense of self and a strong "voice". We hope to introduce students to their next schools who are self-regulated, confident, and creative. Our educational model offers the best of both academic, and play based worlds. Teaching staff play alongside, and with children extending experiences, and exploring new ideas and interests.

The written curriculum is also based on formal assessment and teacher observation of the individual child. Standards from the State of Texas for birth through

3-year-olds and Pre-Kindergarten in addition to Pre-Kindergarten Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills are used to set goals and objectives for the children. The teacher uses criteria based on observation, assessment, and Pre-K Guidelines to build a Scope and Sequence for the curriculum. The teachers provide meaningful and culturally sensitive materials that relate specifically to the students of each prospective class. When children share ideas and interests, teaching staff provide schemas to scaffold children and incorporate new experiences. The knowledge of the individual child and class as a whole is accomplished through formal and informal assessment. Some of the tools teachers use are observation, anecdotal records, photos, dated drawings and art work, collected work samples over time, Brigance assessments, family questionnaires, and family conversations, and conferences. Therefore, the content and teaching strategies are both age appropriate, within reason. We believe that children learn best through an emotionally and socially supported environment, positive interactions with teachers and peers, play with classroom equipment and materials, concrete experiences and exploration that scaffold to more abstract concepts, a balance of teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities that occur throughout the day, and modified and/or adapted activities based on age, ability, and interests.

Using schematics, activities are planned and centers are prepared to encourage development. In addition to the classroom, and ample outdoor play, and learning materials, children attend enrichment classes in Chapel (Group 3-Group 5), and Motor Skills.

The school values religious activities as part of the total curriculum. Chapel services are designed to develop a child's awareness of God's love and care, and to help children respond to God's love in praise and thanksgiving. The respect and care shown to children in all of the school's activities seeks to communicate love as a way to live with others.

Meeting the children at their individual level and challenging them to share their creativity, to express their ideas, to mature emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually, to have self-awareness and self-regulation, and to have a positive outlook on who they are, and their ability to gain knowledge, is the daily endeavor of all our staff.

## Classroom Assignment

LHWS has nine classrooms ages 3 months to 5 years of age not yet in Kindergarten. Children are assigned to classrooms based on the Texas Child Care Licensing guidelines, and NAEYC Accreditation Criteria when grouping children. Each

classroom is assigned a Lead Educator or two Co-Lead Educators, and one or two Assistant Educators depending on the size of the group, and developmental needs in the classroom. Children, infants through five-year-olds, stay in their assigned classrooms for a full calendar year. The school calendar year runs from August through May. LHWS offers a Summer program for children who are current students. The students stay with the same group they were assigned to during the school year and move to the next class at the start of the next school year. At LHWS continuity of care for children is of the utmost importance. Social and emotional health is supported by the relationships that come with keeping students with the same educators for a full year.

## Curriculum by Classroom

Warm, responsive, and nurturing care is provided for the children in the **Infant Classes**. Schedules are adjusted according to the child's individual sleeping and eating patterns. A variety of toys, sensory experiences, large and small motor materials, and books are provided for indoor activities. The children enjoy outdoor walks in the Bye Bye Buggy. As the children become more mobile, they enjoy playing on the Infant/Toddler Playground. Music, Movement, and Spanish are offered within these classrooms.

The **Toddler Classes** provide opportunities for play that encourage exploration. Toddlers engage in solitary imaginative play, onlooker play, and parallel play. Teaching staff model appropriate language, and social interaction for toddlers and assist them in their endeavors to learn social and emotional skills. Sensory experiences are provided for toddlers to engage in such as sand and water play. Toddlers spend time outdoors on the infant/toddler playground and exercise large motor skills through pushing, pulling, and climbing. Language development is supported and encouraged through songs, emergent literacy, finger plays, and listening and responding during everyday conversations. A classroom climbing structure provides opportunities for gross motor development. Toddlers have enrichment opportunities in Motor Skills each day, and Music and Movement within the classroom.

**The Preschool Classes** provide whole group activities, small group activities, and individual activities for the children. The classroom is divided into learning areas which include the art center, science or discovery centers, block center, manipulative or

fine motor center, literacy centers, quiet centers, sensory, dramatic play centers, listening center, and music center. In the older preschool classroom there is an emphasis on phonics, writing, math, and science. Children are encouraged to participate in self-selected activities in these learning centers which are pursued either on their own or in small groups with guidance from the teacher. Outdoor play and learning is provided to each of the preschool classes every morning and afternoon.

Children in our **2-Year-Old Classes** are provided with many opportunities to practice self-help skills, fine and gross motor skills, and socialization skills. Receptive and expressive language is encouraged to further develop in whole group experiences such as circle time, and in everyday interactions between the students themselves and between the student and teacher. Materials and time are provided for children to explore and learn about the environment, to exercise their natural curiosity, and to experiment with cause and effect relationships, thus promoting cognitive development. Creativity is fostered through dramatic play, music, open-ended art and sensory experiences, block play, and movement activities to name a few.

The curriculum for the **Three-Year-Old Class** is a cumulation of already learned skills put into practice. Students in these classes have mastered cognitive skills, large and small motor skills, and language development. Three year olds are independent, and need opportunities to practice their skills. Students will progress through various stages of play; solitary, parallel, and then cooperative. As they near 4 years of age they will begin to play in large groups in socio-dramatic play, organized games, and games with rules. We approach language in a holistic fashion. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are all taught simultaneously. Children proceed at their own pace and approach the activities at their developmental level. The children are exposed to a print-rich environment that encourages early reading skills. Phonemic awareness activities are provided and encourage children to begin to recognize simple sounds and words. Outdoor play and Motor Skills Class further develop large motor skills. Mud kitchens, sand and water play, climbing structures, and bikes are provided for these students to engage in. Puzzles, pegboards, painting, cutting, and other similar activities develop small muscle skills. The children experiment and enjoy various types of music and art. All activities are responsive to individual abilities and interests.

The curriculum for the **4-Year-Olds** is built from a Scope and Sequence based on the Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines. The children continue to acquire knowledge about the physical and social worlds in which they live through meaningful interactions with teachers, other students, and the environment. The children will scaffold to next levels of development at their own pace with support from teaching staff. Complex block



structures, science experiments, and sophistication of play in the dramatic play center are some examples of how learning is supported.

Language learning and the printed word are further expanded through "Handwriting Without Tears" the core of our handwriting curriculum. Phonemic awareness is supported by small group instruction. Math concepts are built into the blocks center (shape, size, eye/hand coordination), sand and water table (shapes, structures, sink or float, early physics, and predictions), manipulatives (helps a student move from concrete thinking to abstract), and dramatic play (counting to set a table, setting a clock, and dialing on a phone). Children understand math concepts best through concrete experiences and developmentally appropriate activities.

The teachers in both Pre-K classes will recognize each child where they are developmentally at and the child's skills set according to the Texas Pre-kindergarten Guidelines in order to help prepare the child for Kindergarten during their last year or two at LHWS. Group 4 and Group 5 are Kindergarten readiness classes and applicable to the students for which it applies.

## Safe Sleep Policy

All educators are required to complete the LHWS Safe Sleep Policy Training annually (Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards 746.2426-746.2429). In addition to completing the policy training staff sign an agreement to follow all safety protocols in regards to the policy. LHWS does not allow infants to sleep in restrictive devices (bouncy seats, boppy pillows, car seats) . Infants are placed on their back to sleep. Infants may not be swaddled. Laurel Heights Weekday School provides an approved sleepsack for each infant. In accordance with Texas Child Care Licensing an approved sleeping device for each infant includes a crib with a firm mattress, one infant in an approved sleepsack, one pacifier with no leash or attachment (optional/parent preference). No blankets, or other soft items are allowed in the approved sleeping device (crib). Additionally, all educators are required annually to have training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. This training teaches awareness about preventative measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of SIDS. Parents may access information at [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Room\\_to\\_Breathe/Safe\\_Sleep\\_Training](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Room_to_Breathe/Safe_Sleep_Training).

## No Babysitting or Transporting Policy

Laurel Heights Weekday School employees may not babysit or provide any kind of private care or services for any child or children who are currently enrolled in Laurel Heights Weekday School during the school year or the Summer. Additionally, no employee may provide transportation for any currently enrolled students.

## Licensing & Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

The State of Texas Child Care Licensing ensures that the school is in compliance with Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. **(Minimum Standard 746.501)** LHWS administration and staff are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. All administration and staff complete annual training on awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, school and community resources, intervention, and reporting child abuse and neglect. A copy of Keeping Children Safe **(DFPS)** is posted on the LHWS Family Board for parents/guardians to reference for information on how to report and contact information of community resources. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available for your review in the school office, or online at [www.tdfps.state.tx.us](http://www.tdfps.state.tx.us) . A copy of the most recent inspection/investigation report is available on the above website, and on the LHWS School information board. You may contact the local Licensing office by calling (210)337-3449. The address for the Licensing Office is P.O Box 23900 San Antonio, Texas 78223-3990. The child abuse hotline number is 1-800-252-5400.

The most recent Fire Marshal's Inspection Report , Health Department's Sanitation Inspection Report, and most recent Gas Pipe Inspection Report are available in the school office. Our operational policies are found in this Family Handbook.

## Confidentiality

All family and child information including, but not limited to, medical records, assessment summary reports, financial records, student files, and forms collected upon registration are kept in the school's office and are strictly confidential. Student health and safety files are immediately available to the individual child's parent or legal guardians, school's administration, child's teaching staff, NAEYC, and all regulatory authorities with parental consent, and are kept confidential. The information viewed provides the teacher an understanding of the child to provide individualized care.

## NAEYC Accreditation

The National Association for the Education of Young Children provides a national, voluntary accreditation system that provides best practices for young children. While a licensed school meets Minimum Standards required by the state, a NAEYC Accredited school provides higher quality standards of education, and regulation. Since the system began in 1985, NAEYC Accreditation has provided a powerful tool through which early childhood professionals, families, and others concerned about the quality of early childhood education can evaluate programs, compare them with professional standards, strengthen the program and commit to ongoing evaluation and improvement. Laurel Heights UMC Weekday School has been accredited through NAEYC since 1989. You can find more information on their website [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) .

# Policies of Operation Hours and Admission Policies

Laurel Heights Weekday School is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. Flexible schedules are available for our students. The core day is from 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.. Drop off may be scheduled as early as 7:30 a.m. and the day may be extended to a later pick-up time of 5:30 if arrangements have been coordinated with the office. Before school care (7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.) is available for an additional fee for full time and part time students. After school care (3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.) is available for an additional fee for full time and part time students. Any change to your child's schedule requires a 30 day notice to the office. If you need additional services we will try to accommodate as soon as possible. If you are removing services a 30 day notice is required and regular tuition fees will apply for that 30 days.

The school is open year-round with a one week closing in March, May, July, and August, 3 days at Thanksgiving, and two weeks in December. There are various one day holiday closures throughout the year. Please see the yearly calendar enclosed with this handbook for details and additional closings.

## Enrollment

Annual registration for the following school year is held in January. Enrollment is open for current families first. After this priority registration in January enrollment is opened up to siblings on the waiting list and then to other families on the waitlist. Families who wish to be on the waiting list may call to schedule a tour of the program with the executive director. After families meet with the executive director they are offered the opportunity to add their child/children to the waitlist. Children are placed on the waiting list by the child's age and the date the card was completed with priority given to siblings of current students, alumni families and church members. There is a non-refundable fee of \$50.00 to be added to the waiting list for families who are not enrolled. This fee is waived for current families expecting to add another child. A non-refundable registration fee secures a position in the Weekday School until the child starts in the school. The annual fee for full time students is \$500.00 and the part time

annual fee is \$450.00 per year. If your child is enrolled in the after school program there is an annual supply fee of \$75.00.

## Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

While Drop-off and Pick-up times are natural points at which communication with our staff members may occur, the staff member will have limited time to discuss topics with parents due to the need for proper supervision of children. Feel free to contact the office or message your child's Lead Teacher through brightwheel should you wish to visit about any questions or to update the teacher on any important information for the care of your child. The office administration or lead teacher will respond to your request and schedule a conference time. When dropping students off you will be asked to use a barcode to scan and check your child in using your phone and the brightwheel app. Each person who is authorized to drop-off and pick-up the child will have an assigned number associated with the brightwheel account. Please add or remove any contacts or authorized persons from your brightwheel account should changes occur. If you need assistance with this please contact the office.

## Before School / After School / Additional Day

### Drop-in

Before, and After School Care schedules should follow the student's normal weekly schedule. Occasional drop-ins for emergency situations up to 5 times per school year and 2 times in the Summer are permitted. Please call the office if you need to request this occasional service. While it is our desire to meet your family's needs we also must maintain appropriate and safe ratios in our classrooms. Should you like to add Before or After School Care please call the office and we will accommodate as soon as possible. There are daily rates posted on our tuition and fees explaining the cost. Daily additions to Early or Late Care will be based on availability due to our need to provide correct Teacher to student ratios.

## Car Pick-up

All parents picking up early or after the 3:00 PM pick-up are asked to come into the building to pick-up their child/children. Children in Group 1-5 have the option of “car pick-up” for the **3:00 PM pick-up time only**. For car pick-up staff will bring the child to your pick-up area outside of the 1st wing or outside of the Group 4 and 5 playground. Please let your child’s teacher know if you want to utilize the 3:00 PM car pick-up service and your child is in Group 1-5.

If you are planning to keep your child/children out of school for some reason, please send a brightwheel message or contact the office as soon as possible. We keep a record of any illnesses in the school. The school calendar included in this handbook lists all school holidays.

## Accessible Parking

Accessible parking is available outside the Belknap entrance and may only be used by those with an accessible hanger or license plate. If you require assistance with bringing your child/children into the school or if you have a sick child that needs to stay in the car, please contact the school office, and an administrator or teacher will assist you in drop-off or pick-up of your child. **Please never leave a child unattended in a car while coming into the school.**

## Release of a Child/Children

Children are only released to parents, guardians, and other authorized persons on the child’s brightwheel account, or children’s file. If you have an emergency and need to have a person pick-up your child who is not listed please contact the office by phone to share the person’s name and phone number. In your child’s enrollment packet there is a password that you list. In the event that you have to send someone

else to pick-up your child they will need to know this password, and the individual will need to show a current valid picture identification to office personnel.

Please contact the office if any of your contact information changes and we will update it in our systems.

## Daily Program and Routines

We use the brightwheel software system as our main means of communication with our families. Lead teachers post schedules, lesson plans, and newsletters on their student's brightwheel page. Parents have access to see pictures, and daily activities of their child through this means. Each class has a Scope and Sequence that lesson plans are developed from. The lessons are individualized for each student and relevant. Children will engage in activities that are indoors and outdoors, they will be offered two snacks per day, and a rest time. LHWS holds a permit that allows for minimally prepared snacks so we do not offer breakfast or lunch. Each child will bring their own lunch daily. A morning snack will be provided at approximately 9:30 a.m. and in the afternoon following the 3:00 p.m. pick-up.

All classes have a nap or rest time as required by Minimum Standards. Infants and mobile infants not yet walking, sleep in a crib. Toddlers are provided a nap mat, and Preschool aged children are provided with a cot. Children are welcome to bring their own sheet (crib sized), blanket, pillow, and lovey (these items are only allowed for children 12 months and older who are on nap mats/cots). These items should not be bulky and should be small enough to store in a cubby, and the child's backpack. The bedding items will be sent home at the end of each week to be laundered. If the items are soiled they will be sent home and clean linens will need to be sent the next day. Infant/Mobile Infant classes provide sheets for each child's crib, and a sleep sack for all infants and non-walking infants.

## Transportation

Parents transport their children to and from the school. If your child is to be transported home by someone other than you, you must inform the office, and add the person to Brightwheel as an authorized pick-up person. The first time a new person picks up your child from school they will need to bring a current valid photo identification that will be verified and copied to be added to your child's student file. Employees of LHWS may not transport students. All employees sign a No Babysitting / No Transporting Policy. Employees may not buckle children into their car seats or install car seats into vehicles for families picking up children.

## Water Activities

During the Summer program (if allowable with COVID-19 protocols) the school will provide water play activities. Water tables, and sprinklers (weather and water restrictions permitting) will be provided for children to enjoy. **No swimming pools will be allowed.** Children will need to bring/wear water play clothing and water shoes. Please send a towel, a change of clothes, socks and shoes for your child to change into. Each class will have their water play time during the regularly scheduled playground time.

## Animals

A few of our classrooms have fish tanks. Children have a task to care for the fish in their classrooms. Child Care Licensing has strict guidelines in regards to animals visiting the school. Some animals are not allowed in the school, and given authorization to bring an animal in would require written notification to all families in the classroom two-weeks prior to the visit. All visiting animals must bring proof of up-to-date vaccines and a note from the Veterinarian stating that the animal is safe to be around children.



## Breakfast

Children will need to eat breakfast prior to coming to school. Breakfast is not provided. The morning snack will be offered between 9-9:30 a.m..

## Breastfeeding

We promote breastfeeding by:

- Accepting, storing, and serving expressed human milk for feedings.
- Accepting human milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name, date the milk was expressed, and storing it in the refrigerator for the day. All milk will be sent home at the end of the day.
- Gently mixing, not shaking, the milk before feeding to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components in human milk.
- Providing a comfortable place for breastfeeding and coordinating feedings with the infant's mother. LHWS provides a nursing mother's room for our program.

## Snacks

The Weekday School serves snacks in the morning between 9-9:30 a.m. and again in the afternoon between 3-3:30 p.m. after the 3:00 p.m. pick-up. We serve snacks that require minimal preparation as our permit from the Health Department is for Child Care without food preparation. The snacks served to children are based on the current nutritional guidelines provided by the FDA. LHWS provides best practice recommendations and offers healthy, balanced, and nutritious snacks.

# Food Allergies

If your child has food allergies, please schedule a meeting with the executive director, Laurie Miracle, to discuss a preparedness plan for your child. The State of Texas and child care licensing requires that any student with a known food allergy have a F.A.R.E form completed, and a plan on file for the administration and teaching staff to follow.

Parents/Guardians must also fill out an Authorization to Administer Medications form from the school. All medications must be in the original container with the prescription label. Any over-the-counter medications must be in an unopened container that includes a measuring syringe or cup to administer the oral medication.

## Special Medical Management Procedure

For students who have a medical condition, allergies, or asthma and have a medical management procedure plan such as an Asthma Action Plan, or F.A.R.E plan, LHWS will provide personnel assigned to the child's classroom or staff onsite whenever the child is present on campus who are trained in how to manage their specific plan. Families of students with known allergies, asthma, or medical conditions will need to schedule a meeting with the executive director to discuss the medical management procedure plan for their child. This plan will be shared with the assistant director who manages children's records, and medications. The executive director will meet with the educators of the classroom that the student is assigned to and share the plan with them. All pertinent plan information will be posted in a confidential manner in the student's classroom, and in the First Aid Backpack for that classroom. All students who require Epinephrine for allergies, will have one EpiPen in the first aid backpack in their classroom, and one EpiPen in the school office. All oral medications are kept in the school office in a locked cabinet. No EpiPens, over-the-counter medications, or prescription medications may be kept in a child's backpack. Please bring all medications to the school office for proper processing, and paperwork. This includes all sunscreens, bug repellants, lotions, diaper ointment and creams.

# Lunches

All children bring a packed lunch to school. Please remember to add a cool pack to your child's lunch to maintain freshness. Families of infants will need to provide all breastmilk and/or formula, baby foods, bottles, and sippy cups. Please send your bottle cool packs with a frozen ice pack to maintain freshness for any milk that is sent home. The Infant and Mobile Infant classrooms have refrigerators with freezers to store bottles with breastmilk or formula.

Per our Licensing regulations we are not allowed to heat children's lunches in the microwave. Foods that require warming should be heated at home and sent in a thermos that can keep the food warm until lunchtime. Soda water, and any carbonated drink, or any drink in a can is not allowed. Candy is discouraged. Please send a balanced, and nutritious lunch to fuel your child through the day. Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> for new USDA nutritional guidelines.

For all infants and children with special dietary requirements or needs, a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes is sent home.

Water is readily available throughout the day. (Infants younger than 6 months of age only need to be offered their breastmilk or formula). After 6 months of age a sippy cup can be introduced, and water offered.

The snack menu is on our website, posted at our entryway to the school, and posted on each classroom door. For children who have food allergies a snack menu is sent home or emailed to the parents/guardians for review, and then turned back into the teacher with snacks marked off that cannot be offered. The parent/guardian will need to provide an alternative snack if their child is unable to partake of the provided snack.

According to NAEYC Standard 5.B food that comes from home sharing amongst the children (ex. Birthday Snacks) must be fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers. Food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the USDA Child Adult Food Program Guidelines. Staff must take the following steps to ensure the safety of food brought from home:

**Please cut foods into pieces no larger than ¼ inch squares for infants and ½ inch squares for toddlers/twos, and threes.**

**Staff must avoid serving foods determined by health authorities, Minimum Standards, and indicated by NAEYC accreditation criteria to be choking hazards for children under 4 years of age, including nuts, marshmallows, popcorn, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter (including dipping cups of peanut butter), raw peas, chunks of raw carrot, whole grapes, and hot dogs (whole, or sliced into rounds), and raisins (for children under 2 years-old).**

# Diaper Changing and Toileting Procedures

Parents need to send enough disposable diapers for the day in the diaper bag for infants and in a tote bag or backpack for toddlers and older. We do not allow cloth diapers. You may provide a diaper ointment or cream for your child, if needed. Forms are available upon request. The form provided will authorize the school to administer the needed ointment or cream. Please send the ointment/cream labeled with your child's first and last name. The school provides wipes. Diapers are checked every 2 hours and changed as needed. LHWS has no restrictions as far as age at which toilet learning must occur.

## Toilet Learning

There is no set age at which toilet learning should begin. The right time depends on the child's physical and psychological development. Children younger than 12 months have no control over bladder or bowel movements and little control for 6 months or so after that. At around 24 months some children may begin to show signs of being ready, but some children may not be ready until 30 months or older.

The child must also be emotionally ready. He needs to be willing, not fighting you or showing signs of fear. If a child resists strongly, it is best to wait for a while. Look for these readiness signs; the child hides when he/she needs to have a bowel movement, the child verbalizes that he/she needs to use the toilet, and the child wakes up dry from naps and nighttime sleep. We will not engage in any practice which contradicts our discipline and guidance standards and criteria.

Please talk with your child's teacher when you are seeing signs of readiness in your child, and you are ready to begin the process with your child. If the teacher sees signs your child is ready, she may approach you about trying first steps.

## Birthdays and Invitations

Birthdays are special to the children. We encourage parents/guardians to communicate with the lead teacher, in advance, if they would like to provide a special snack, or activity for the children to enjoy. Please see restrictions in the lunch section. Please feel free to provide a fun activity for children instead of a food item. We encourage out of the box thinking and welcome new ideas for ways to celebrate. If you do choose to provide a snack please bring commercially prepared packaged foods in a factory sealed container. If cupcakes are sent from a bakery we ask that you refrain from sending the large cupcakes with bright colored icing. Please check with your child's teacher prior to bringing any snack to see if there are any allergies in that classroom. **We ask that you give a couple of days' notice if you are bringing in a snack in order to inform any families who may have a child with allergies in the classroom and planning for an alternative snack for the child with allergies can be arranged.** Also note that non-food celebrations are encouraged in lieu of food. Please keep the celebration simple; we cannot have your child's birthday party at school.

If you want to send a birthday invitation to the children in our child's class the following criteria must be met. All children in the classroom must be invited, all invitations must be given to the lead teacher to be sent home with each child. The child who is having the birthday party must be a currently enrolled student.

## Closings for Weather, Emergencies, and Community Pandemics

It is possible we may have to close due to inclement weather. We will be closed when Alamo Heights independent school District makes the decision to close. Listen to local news media for Alamo Heights' closures. Laurel Heights Weekday School will send communication through brightwheel to all families as this is our main means of communication with our families.

For emergencies the Laurel Heights Weekday School will follow the posted plans for any evacuation, and safety.

For community spread pandemic preparedness and closures, the Laurel Heights Weekday School will follow our Preparedness Plan and any orders issued by state and local authorities. We will follow all required and recommended regulations as we seek to provide best practices for students and families.

## Safety Drills and Plans

Fire drills occur once a month and tornado/earthquake and inclement weather drills and Lockdown drills occur 4 times annually. In the case of an emergency, such as a chemical spill in the area, we will relocate to the city-designated location. Please listen to the radio and TV to determine where we will be. If the reason to relocate is not a city emergency, we will relocate to Christ Episcopal Church located at 510 Belknap, or Alamo Heights United Methodist Church located at 825 East Basse Rd. Our emergency plan is available for you to view in the office. We also have “safety” drills 4 times annually. This drill prepares the staff and students on what to do should an intruder enter our school. We choose our words carefully in how we share this with students.

## Health Procedures

### Immunization Requirements

As required by state law, each child must have a medical form on file in the office with an up-to-date immunization record. Whenever your child gets an immunization, please bring in a copy of the updated immunization record to the school office or email a copy to the assistant director ( [cfredrickson@lhwds.com](mailto:cfredrickson@lhwds.com) ). Please contact the school office should you have questions about immunizations. LHWS requires all children to be vaccinated in accordance with the State of Texas prior to attending school. This order is to endure the health and safety of all children, staff, and families, and to prevent all vaccine preventable diseases.

Please provide health insurance information for your child on the registration form. Provide permission for transportation and receipt of emergency medical services

on the registration form as well. If you cannot be reached during an emergency, the director or designee will be in charge of transporting your child unless it is an emergency and EMS will be called. If you are not available to escort your child with EMS, the director or designee will.

## Eco-Healthy Practices

LHWS mitigates practices that will enhance the safety and security of the children, families, educators, and administrators in the program environment. Collecting data, and finding healthy and safe practices that support the physical, social and emotional development of children is our priority. We purchase non-toxic toys and art supplies for the classroom environments. Each classroom is equipped with an air purifier. Children spend ample time outdoors exploring, and engaging in learning experiences. All cleaning products are EPA approved, and fragrance free including the detergent used to wash school items.

## Preferred Hospital

On your child's enrollment card and in the registration packet, you have the opportunity to tell us your preferred hospital should your child need one. If it is not an immediate emergency, we will abide by your choice, otherwise, your child will be taken to the nearest facility, Metropolitan Methodist Hospital.

# Food/Environmental Allergies

If your child has food/environmental allergies, please schedule a meeting with the executive director, Laurie Miracle, to discuss a preparedness plan for your child. The State of Texas and child care licensing requires that any student with a known food allergy have a F.A.R.E form completed, and a plan on file for the administration and teaching staff to follow. Parents/Guardians must also fill out an Authorization to Administer Medications form from the school. All medications must be in the original container with the prescription label. Any over-the-counter medications must be in an unopened container that includes a measuring syringe or cup to administer the oral medication.

# Asthma Action Plan

If your child has been diagnosed with asthma and requires the use of any medications, inhaler, or nebulizer treatments please have your child's doctor fill out the Asthma Action Plan. All medications must be in the original container with the prescription label. Parents/Guardians must fill out the Authorization to Administer Medication form from the school.

# Over-The-Counter or Prescription Medication

The school administers over-the-counter medications if the school is provided written authorization by a licensed health care provider, and the child's parent/guardian, with the child's first and last name, name of over-the-counter medication, dosage. The school administers prescription medication if the medication is labeled with the child's first and last name, name of clinician, expiration date, and manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medications as directions on administering and storing. It must be accompanied by instructions on dosage and time by the child's physician. The parent/guardian must administer the first dose of medication to the child. Medication is



administered only if there is an authorization form filled out by the parent and turned into the Weekday School office.

Please bring all medications to the Weekday School office. Under no circumstance are medications allowed in children's backpacks, diaper bags, totes, or lunch bags. Please contact or stop by the office to fill out an authorization form for the medication. This applies to any medications, insect repellents, chapsticks, sunscreen, and EPIPEN. Insect repellent and sunscreen may be kept in the locked first aid bag in classrooms after the authorization forms have been completed. Parents are responsible for applying sunscreen and insect repellent in the morning and teaching staff will reapply it in the afternoon.

## Special Medical Conditions And Emergency Care Plans

If you have a child with medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, seizures, orthopedic or sensory challenges, and other chronic conditions which might require regular medication or technology support, we need to have an individual emergency care plan on file. Please coordinate with your child's physician and the school office on this.

## Hearing and Vision Required Screening

The State of Texas and our Licensing regulatory agency require all children to have a hearing and vision screening. Test results must be on file for all children 4 years-old by September 1st of the year. LHWS partners with Olmas Speech, Language and Learning Clinics to provide speech and language testing for 4-Year-Olds. Notices for this screening are sent out to parents in paper form, and the cost for the service is covered by the family.

## Illness and Exclusion Criteria

The following guidelines for the exclusion of children will be followed. A child will not be allowed to attend if:

- An illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in classroom activities, including outside play during normal weather conditions.
- The illness or disposition of the child results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other students.
- If your child has a fever of 100.0 degrees or greater he/she will need to remain out of the program until he/she is 24 hours fever free without the aid of fever reducing medications. If your child sees the doctor and receives a doctor's note with an alternative diagnosis of an illness that is not contagious he/she may return to the program once he/she is fever free without the aid of fever reducing medications for 24 hours.
- He or she has vomiting or diarrhea. The student must remain out of the program until the vomiting and diarrhea have ceased and it has been 24 hours since the last episode.
- He or she has a rash with a fever, discharge from the eyes, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior changes, or other unusual signs inconsistent with typical behavior, until medical evaluation indicates the child can be included in classroom activities.
- The child has been diagnosed with any communicable disease, including but not limited to: chickenpox, mumps, measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever, fifth disease, strep throat, lice, conjunctivitis or pink eye, COVID-19. The child may not attend until medical evaluation determines that the disease is no longer communicable and the child is able to participate in classroom activities. Children must recuperate at home. The child must be symptom free before returning to school and must have the approval from administration.

# COVID-19 Protocols

**Families will be contacted to pick-up their child if they become ill while in the program and have the following symptoms. If students are displaying these symptoms at home we ask that families keep the student home.**

- Fever of 100 degrees or above.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Students who are unable to participate and require greater care than can be provided due to needed classroom supervision.

**Child is sick or has a positive COVID-19 test (regardless of vaccination status) will need to remain out of the program until the following steps and criteria have been met:**

**Day 1-5:** Child stays home and isolates.

**Day 6 - 10:** Children may take a COVID-19 test (Must be through a clinic or a home test taken into the school office and done in front of the Director). **If the test is negative**, and symptoms are resolving (no fever for 24 hours, no diarrhea or vomiting, and other symptoms are improving ex. Coughing or congestion) the child may return to the program. If the **test is positive**, the child must stay out for an additional 5 days and may return on the 11th day after a positive test since symptoms started, **or** provide a negative COVID-19 test (from a clinic or a home test done in the school office in front of the director) within that 5 day period and have symptoms resolving (no fever for 24 hours, no vomiting or diarrhea, and other symptoms are improving ex. Coughing or congestion).

**Child has been exposed to COVID-19:**

- The child will not be excluded from care unless they are showing signs and symptoms of illness.
- If COVID-19 is in the child's household please contact the office for guidance.
- If the child is fully vaccinated they may remain in the program unless they are showing signs and symptoms of illness.

**Cleaning and disinfection will be maintained according to Texas Child Care**

**Licensing & NAEYC regulations:**

- LHWS has contracted an independent Custodial Service through Corvus. This team cleans the building in the evening after school has been dismissed.
- All classroom staff maintain the cleanliness of their environments throughout the day by following the regular Cleaning Sanitizing and Disinfecting Table recommendations.

- Hand washing is done upon arrival, before meals and snacks, after diaper changes or toileting, before/after playing in water tables, after coming in from outdoors, and whenever deemed necessary due to hygiene needs.

**If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the program:**

- Families who have a child in the same classroom as the child with a positive COVID-19 case will be notified through brightwheel to inform them of possible exposure.
- Areas used by the sick person will be cleaned, disinfected, and sanitized by the contracted cleaning team (Corvus).
- Doors and windows will be opened to ventilate the area (if possible).

## Late Pick-up Fees for Sick Children

When students are ill, parents/guardians are contacted to pick-up their child. LHWS ask that should you receive a call or a brightwheel message that your child needs to be picked up from school due to illness that you arrive within 45 minutes. In the event that you pick your child up beyond the 45 minute window we will give you a reminder of this policy. The second time a family is past the 45 minute pick up time allotment, there will be a \$150.00 charge and a \$300.00 charge will be added to your bill the third time. Please understand that we are doing everything that we can to stop the spread of illness both to other students and staff. You are welcome to add more contacts into brightwheel that are allowed to pick up your child in the event of illness.

## COVID-19 Statement

Our administrative staff are monitoring guidelines, current happenings and new variants with this virus. We appreciate your understanding as we may need to change our policies and protocols with little notice to maintain safety for all. Brightwheel is our main source of communication between the school and families. Please download the app to have access to all the information. If you have any questions or need assistance with the application please stop by the office.

# Injury

If a child is injured, we administer first aid, call the family, and if indicated, take him/her directly to the doctor or hospital. All staff are trained in First Aid, CPR, and how to administer an EPIPen. An Incident Report will be filled out, for any incidents, illness, or accidents that occur at school. The report will be signed by the administration and the parent/guardian. If the child's incident requires a doctor's visit, the information will be reported to Child Care Licensing.

# Hand Washing

Hand washing is the most important means of interrupting the transmission of infection. Children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene will be taught proper hand washing procedures and are monitored to support progress. Children wash either independently or with staff assistance. Upon arrival each day, we direct children to the hand washing sinks upon entrance to the classroom. Proper hand washing procedures must be followed by adults and children and include:

1. Using liquid soap and running water.
2. Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds including the back of the hands, palms of hands, in between fingers, fingernails, around the thumbs, and around the wrist.
3. Rinsing well, drying hands with a paper towel and avoiding touching the faucet with clean hands by using the paper towel to turn off the water faucet.
4. The use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is appropriate for use when hands are not visibly soiled, and should only be used by children over the age of two years old. Children should be monitored at all times while using hand sanitizer, and it should be stored out of reach of children.

# Insurance

The school carries liability insurance through the Laurel Heights United Methodist Church's policy. The school has a group accident policy that covers injuries to children that occur at school or on school sponsored trips according to the terms stated in the contract. The office has insurance forms available for submitting claims if your child is injured and requires medical attention.

# Children's Personal Items

All students must bring a tote bag, diaper bag, or backpack to school each day. Please ensure that there is a change of clothes, socks, underwear, and shoes in your child's bag. More changes of clothing need to be sent if your child is toilet learning. Children need to bring a packed lunch with a frozen cool pack to keep items cold. Children may bring their own cup for water each day. Children are welcome to bring a blanket, pillow, and lovey for rest time. These items should not be bulky and should fit easily into their bag, and cubby. The Infants and Mobile Infants will follow the children's individualized feeding schedules. Infants may bring a diaper bag. Disposable diapers can be sent for the day, or week.

# Dress Requirements

Play clothes are the best clothes for children to wear to school. It is much easier for children to play and engage in activities if they are not worrying about getting their clothes dirty. Children need to wear rubber-soled tennis shoes, or closed toe shoes each day. Please do not send your child in boots or sandals. Sandals that have a rubber sole and are closed over the toe are permitted, and boots can be worn for special occasions like Rodeo Day. We ask that you send a pair of tennis shoes in your child's bag to change into for outdoor play and motor skills.

## Building Security and Access

The Mistletoe entrance is locked for entry and open for exit to the playgrounds or for emergencies at all times. The Woodlawn entrance is either locked and/or monitored by the church receptionist and has keyless entry. The Belknap entrance is either locked and/or monitored by a Weekday School employee during school hours and has keyless entry. Parents may fill out a Key Fob request form at the office. This keyless entry device will also be used to access the Weekday School hallways and get beyond the security doors once inside our building. Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 100 feet of LHWS is considered a gang-free zone.

## Fees and Monthly Charges

**Full tuition is charged every month regardless of school holidays or family time away, with the exception of the August tuition. During August there is a proration for the end of Summer Program (for students enrolled in the Summer Program) and the beginning of Fall school year. This is the only month proration is applied.**

Refer to the fee schedule on our website [www.laurelheightsweekdayschool.com](http://www.laurelheightsweekdayschool.com) to determine your child's annual registration fee, monthly tuition, before school care, after school care, early and late fees.

You will not be reimbursed for vacations taken during the school year or for illness. While your child is absent, our daily costs proceed and your child's place in the class is held.

Tuition and other fees can be paid with cash, check, or through your brightwheel app. Brightwheel offers the option to set-up autopay through your brightwheel account. It has been LHWS practice that parents are requested to make a voluntary donation to cover the cost of using credit cards or EFTs. The charges that we are currently incurring with brightwheel are:

Credit Cards Fees(**this includes debit cards**): 2.95%

EFT Fee: .6% per transaction (not to exceed \$2.00 total transaction fee)

We seek to make payments convenient for our families but as a non-profit business our budget cannot support incurring this cost. Families are always welcome to pay by check or cash. We have a tuition box located at the window of the school office. If you pay by check please let our receptionist know and she can assist you with a receipt.

## Annual Registration Fees

Registration fees are due annually and are paid upon registration of your child. There are varying fees depending on the schedule you choose for your child. Refer to the fee schedule at the back of this handbook. The registration fee is due when you register your child and it holds a place in the school for your child until the second registration fee is due. The registration fee is non refundable and non transferable at any time. The second registration fee is non refundable and non transferable and holds your child's place in the school from the time it is paid until the school year begins and is part of the cost of sending your child to Laurel Heights Weekday School. For students enrolled in after school there is an annual supply fee of \$75 per year and for students enrolling in the Summer Program there is a supply fee of \$100 due at the time of registration.

## Late Fees

Tuition payments are due on the 5th of each month. If your bill is not paid by the 10th of the month a fee of \$10.00 is assessed to your account. Bills paid after the 15th of the month have an additional \$25.00 late fee assessed to your account. Bills not paid by the 20th day of the next month will be brought before the school board for consideration of dismissal of the student and/or the development of a payment option. Exceptions to this policy must be presented to the Director for the School Board for consideration.



## Late Pick Up Fees

Core day students must be picked up by 3:00 p.m.. After 3:00 p.m. late fees will be assessed as follows. For any duration of time past 3:00 p.m. up to 10 minutes, you will be charged a flat fee of \$15.00. For each additional minute that exceeds 10 minutes, you will be charged \$2.00 per minute. Groups 1 - 5 may utilize car pick up. After car pick up students will be taken back to the classroom, parents will be notified, and late fees will be assessed to the account. If you are late for the 5:30 p.m. pick up, the charge will be as follows: for any duration after 5:30 p.m. up to 10 minutes, you will be charged a flat fee of \$15.00. For each additional minute that exceeds 10 minutes, you will be charged \$2.00 per minute. For example, if your child's pick up time is 5:30 p.m. and you arrive at 5:41 p.m, the charge is \$17.00. **After 12 late charges (this includes the 3:00 PM pick-up time & the 5:30 PM pick-up time) in a school year** the fee will be \$30.00 for the first fifteen minutes and \$4.00 per minute after that.

## Need-Based Scholarships

The Weekday School, each year, has a fund for scholarship assistance. If you have a financial need, please contact the Executive Director, Laurie Miracle. Scholarships are granted in the Spring for the Fall of the following year unless funds are immediately available. The School Board makes scholarship decisions.

## Parent Involvement

We believe you are an integral part of your child's experience at Laurel Heights Weekday School and we want to work with you in any way to make your experience beneficial to your family. We welcome your questions, comments, concerns, and ideas. We would like to do everything possible to come to a solution, especially when our values and practices differ from yours.

## Communication

The teacher's schedule parent / teacher conferences each year with each family. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to attend. The parents or the teacher may schedule other conferences if need arises. Communication from school to home is primarily through brightwheel. Lead teachers send daily pictures, and information through brightwheel to each family. In addition to brightwheel, lead teachers call parents to discuss any concerns or upcoming events. Communication from home to school is best through the brightwheel app, phone call, or email. All newsletters, and lesson plans are located on brightwheel as well. The monthly snack menu is available on our website; [www.laurelheightweekdayschool.com](http://www.laurelheightweekdayschool.com) .

## Class Directory

Each of our nine classrooms will have a class directory. This directory is available to the families who have authorized their information to be added on their child's enrollment paperwork. Class directories are located on brightwheel under attachments on your child's "Feed". Go to your child's home page, go to the top of the screen and click on Attachments. It will take you to the page with the document.

## Photography

Students' pictures are taken and shared with parents, guardians, and authorized family members only in our brightwheel communications system. Some pictures may be used on the Laurel Heights Weekday School Website. Parent authorization is given on the child's enrollment paperwork. Should a parent/guardian not wish to have their child/children photographed please note this on the enrollment form.

## Home Language

LHWS will make every effort to work with families that speak a language other than English in the home and/or are bilingual. If needed, a teacher that speaks fluent Spanish can join in with the teacher or director for the enrollment process, parent-teacher conference and other meetings as needed and written materials will be provided in Spanish when available. If the home language is other than Spanish, we will ask the family if there is a family member who knows English and the home language who can translate.

Families that speak languages other than English are encouraged to share with the teachers simple words and phrases to use in conversations, and label classroom items for learning, to provide a more culturally sensitive environment for the individual child.

Terminology associated with body parts (anatomical), bodily functions (go potty, pee-pee, tinkle, poop, bowel movement), mealtime, family relationships (nana, oma, daddy, papa, baba, ate) and daily activities can be shared between the families and the educators to support the child's family culture.

## Visiting the School

Parents/Guardians are welcome to enter the school and drop-off and pick-up your child/children. Please note that due to COVID-19 protocols we ask all families to limit their time in the building to 14 minutes. Please do not enter the classroom environment (\*This includes the gymnasium, playgrounds, or any other room being used by the classroom children)at drop-off/pick-up time as we are working very hard to keep strict isolation of classrooms in place to prevent spread of germs.

## Volunteering

There are many ways in which you can volunteer to help at the school. Each teacher has specific needs which she will present at the beginning of the school year. The director will call for volunteers throughout the year.

## Donations

The Laurel Heights Weekday School is a ministry of the Laurel Heights UMC, and any donation made is tax deductible for you. If you would like to make a donation, please contact the executive director, Laurie Miracle. If you are uncertain about what the school needs, Mrs. Miracle will supply a list of needs. Currently, we are in need of scholarship funds for children who would not otherwise be able to attend a high quality early childhood program.

## Conflict Resolution Procedure

The executive director trains, and coaches staff on dealing with conflict resolution. The first step in the training is leadership. The lead educator is responsible for the classroom, the assistant educators, and the children assigned to the class. The responsibilities include leading the staff through modeling classroom management, curriculum and assessments of children, and communicating with parents. The assistant educators assigned to the classroom are to defer all in depth questions regarding child development or parental concerns to the lead educator or to the director. If the lead educator is not available the assistant educator may offer the parent another option (i.e. the lead educator may call them at first availability to discuss the matter). If the parent shows signs of distress and needs to speak to someone right away, the assistant educator may defer to the office and offer the parent the opportunity to speak with the director. If that approach is not effective, she can excuse herself from the parent at the door, step over to the classroom phone, call the office and ask for the director to come to the classroom.

The executive director manages all conflicts with staff and families. Below are the conflict resolution steps used:

- First, identify what is causing the conflict.
- Second, ask probing questions, and look beyond the initial reactive response.
- Third, be a mediator.
- Fourth, discuss solutions.
- Lastly, decide what solutions are agreeable to both parties.

The executive director will work with all parties involved and create a plan, and then agree to meet again for a follow-up meeting.

If the conflict is not resolved by the above steps, the executive director can seek counsel from the LHWS Board Chairperson, or the LHWS Lawyer for appropriate next steps.

All conversations will be kept confidential, and will be provided in a private office space.

## Grievance Procedure

Questions, comments, concerns, and ideas are all welcomed by the teachers and director. If you have a concern, you are encouraged to inform the teacher. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, or do not feel satisfied, please contact the Executive, Laurie Miracle at (210)732-6979 (school) or email her at [lmiracle@lhwds.com](mailto:lmiracle@lhwds.com) . We will make every effort to work with families in any situation which may arise. You are encouraged to talk with us.

If you feel the problem is unresolved after talking with the teacher and director, you may also contact your class parent council representative or a member of the School Board of Directors at Laurel Heights United Methodist Church, 227 W. Woodlawn San Antonio, Texas 78212 (see list following). Please put your concern in writing to the Board of Directors. You may, also, contact the TX Department of Family and Protective Services at (210)337-3449 or P.O. Box 23900, San Antonio, TX 78223-3990.

## Parent Support Team

This team helps to organize fundraising and other parent events. The Parent Support Team is composed of one parent from each class, the school director, and other parents serving as project chairpersons. The Director appoints the parent representative for a one year term, from the start of the Fall School Year, July 31st-May 31st.

## Church Involvement

Basic Christian principles are reinforced daily in the classrooms, and in a weekly non-denominational chapel service, and further reinforced in the celebration of Christian holidays.

The school values religious activities as part of the total curriculum. Chapel services are designated to develop children's awareness of God's love and care, and to help children respond to God's Love in praise and thanksgiving. The respect and care shown to children in all of the school's activities seeks to communicate love as a way to live with others.

It is our hope that families will further involve their children in religious and nurturing family experiences at home, and in regular attendance at a place of worship. We believe the family is the most important place where children can be nurtured in faith. Should a family want guidance in this area, the church staff is ready to help.

## Spiritual Engagement

Laurel Heights Weekday School is a Christian School. Basic Christian principles are reinforced daily in classrooms, and in a weekly chapel service. Staff lead students in a short prayer before meals and Christian holidays are celebrated and discussed in the classrooms. Students coming to the office for sickness or booboos may be offered prayer as a part of our nurturing environment.

The school values religious activities as part of the total curriculum. Chapel services and all spiritual education opportunities are designated to develop children's awareness

of God's love and care, and to help children respond to God's love in praise and thanksgiving. The respect and care shown to children in all of the school's activities seeks to communicate love as a way to live with others.

All families are welcome at Laurel Heights Weekday School regardless of religious beliefs. We seek to support your family's faith journey. Should you have questions or seek guidance in this area the Laurel Heights United Methodist Church staff are available.

## School Board

The School Board meets once a month with the school director to set policy, review finances, and advise the director concerning the affairs of the Weekday School. The School Board consists of up to seven Laurel Heights UMC members elected by the Administrative Board of the Church, and one ex-officio member who is the Senior Pastor of the Church or his designated Church staff member.

## School Board Members

Kelsey Shaw	Chairperson
Jeffrey Landers	Treasurer
Nick Campbell	
Esther Chalk	
Barbara Miller	
Laura Healy	Director of Christian Education & Pastoral Representative
Mysti Trainer	
Laurie Miracle	Executive Director
Rev. Lisa M. Straus	Senior Pastor

## Administrative Staff Information

### **Executive Director: Laurie Miracle**

Laurie Miracle is the Executive Director for Laurel Heights Weekday School. Laurie has a Bachelor's Degree in Human Sciences from Texas Tech University. Laurie is an Early Childhood Interventionist and has worked as a Special Education classroom teacher. She taught PPCD in the Alamo Heights School District where she started the Mini Mule Program. In her 30 years of working in Early Education she has provided behavioral counseling for families, Staff Development, and Parent Seminars for San Antonio Early Childhood Centers.

### **Assistant Director: Cassi Fredrickson**

Cassi Fredrickson is the Assistant Director for Laurel Heights Weekday School. Cassi has an Associates of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education, a Child Development Associate's Credential, and a State of Texas Director Credential. She joined the LHWS staff in 2015. In her 30 years of working in Early Education she has worked as a Reading Specialist, Special Education Instructional Aide, and managed a Licensed Air Force Family Day School Program for children birth - school age.

### **Office Administrator: Norma Hamilton**

Norma Hamilton is the Receptionist and Bookkeeper for Laurel Heights Weekday School. She has a Bachelor's Degree of Business Administration and joined Laurel Heights UMC Weekday School in 2019 as the front desk receptionist.



# Laurel Heights Weekday School Lead Teachers

## **Infants: Rachel Martinez**

Rachel Martinez Co-Leads the Infant Class with Maribel Moreno. Rachel has worked at LHWS since 2004. Rachel has a Child Development Associate's Credential and an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

## **Infants: Maribel Moreno**

Maribel Moreno holds a Child Development Associate's Credential and joined LHWS in January 2023. She Co-Leads the Infant Class with Rachel Martinez.

## **Mobile Infants: Rose Saldivar**

Rose holds a Child Development Associate's Credential and has worked in Early Childhood Education for more than 20 years. Rose joined the LHWS team in 2016.

## **Toddler 1: Makayla Pedraza**

Makayla graduated from Palo Alto College with her Associate of Arts - Teaching. Makayla continued her degree plan at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She has been part of the LHWS community since 2018. Makayla has worked with our infants through preschool aged students. She has taught in the public school system and has been the lead in our Group 5 class during the Summer program.

## **Toddler 1: Mariesa Alexander**

Mariesa graduated from San Antonio College with her Associate of Arts in Speech. Mariesa has continued her degree at Our Lady of the Lake University. She joined our LHWS team in 2021 and has worked with our toddlers through preschool aged students.

## **Toddler 2: Lucy Coleman**

Lucy graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University with Bachelors degree in Fine Arts. She has been working in ECE for 3 years and is starting her second year and Laurel Heights Weekday School.

## **Group 1: Alex Hernandez**

Alex is starting her fourth year at Laurel Heights Weekday School. Alex is pursuing her BA in Education. Alex is a Co-Lead in Training in the Toddler 2 Class.

## **Group 2: Tabitha Amador**

Tabitha graduated from Sam Houston State University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. She has much experience working in the preschool setting and joined the LHWS team in 2021.

## **Group 3: Martha Lybrook**

Martha received her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Nueva Galicia. She also holds a Child Development Associate's Credential. Martha has been teaching at LHWS since 2016.

## **Group 3: Jen Shields**

Jen has a Bachelor of Science from the University of San Antonio in Interior Design and a Bachelor of Arts from California State University, Chico in Early Childhood Development with a minor in Psychology. She comes with many years of experience working with preschool aged children and the NAEYC accreditation process. Jen joined the LHWS team in 2021.

## **Group 4: Melissa Aguilar**

Melissa has her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, and an Associates of Applied Science from San Antonio College. Melissa has worked for more than 20 years in ECE and joined our LHWS team in May 2023!

## **Group 5: Laurie Shields-Sanders**

Laurie holds a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities and a Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Education from Trinity University. She joined the LHWS team in 2008.

