

Five Star Parent Handbook / Operational Policies

Welcome to Five Star Montessori School. Our lead primary (3 to 6 years old) teachers have been accredited by AMS (American Montessori Society), or have similar accreditation or training. Our outstanding staff utilizes the Montessori Method of teaching to help your child reach his/her full potential.

We provide a loving, nurturing and safe environment to give your child a sense of success and acceptance. Everyone on our staff has made a commitment to treat each child with love and respect. We strive to make our facility a happy and fun place that your child will look forward to attending.

Program Philosophy

The overall goal of Five Star Montessori is to provide opportunities for intellectual, emotional and social development of the children. Five Star is committed to provide each child and their family:

- A healthy and safe environment.
- A positive and encouraging environment to develop self-esteem, an enjoyment of learning and build a strong foundation for a lifetime of learning.
- Challenging surroundings, which stimulate creativity, curiosity, and foster independence, problem solving and original thought.
- An atmosphere of cooperation to foster respectful and harmonious relations with one another.
- Opportunities for responsible group membership and intercultural exchange, to cultivate communication skills and appreciation of individual uniqueness.
- A climate of respect for the learning process in which educators, students, and their families are partners.

High Quality Program Elements

At Five Star, we are continually improving and developing our program. The daily schedule provides a balance of activities in consideration of the child's total daily experience. Our environment provides a variety of lessons and materials that are selected to emphasize concrete experiential learning. Staff persons are warm and nurturing, maximizing positive interactions with children and working to empower the child and boost their self-esteem.

Licensing

We are licensed by the State of Texas and adhere to their regulations and meet or exceed the states standards. These standards relate to our physical facility, staff, health and safety procedures, nutrition, and record keeping. The center undergoes regular inspections by the city health department, fire department and state licensing.

Enrollment

Five Star Montessori School provides a developmental curriculum for children ages 6 weeks through 6 years old (Kindergarten). We also provide after school care and full-time care during the summer for elementary school age children up to 12 years old. Children are enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis, regardless of race, color, creed or ethnic origin. We maintain a waiting list and accommodate children, as space becomes available. Admission of exceptional or physically and mentally challenged children is decided on an individual basis depending on our ability to meet the child's needs.

Parent Notifications

Parents will be notified of any policy or procedural changes by email. In case of a closing or an emergency, parents will be notified by email and text.

Keeping Records Current

In order to provide emergency medical care to children at the center, we require signed authorization by each child's parent or legal guardian. We maintain vital information about each child, such as parent's office and home phone numbers and addresses; and the name, address, and phone number of the child's physician. This form must be kept current and on file as long as the child is at the school. Please notify us of any changes. Parents have the right to access their own child's record during a parent conference with teacher or the Director.

Health and Immunization Requirements

In accordance with Texas State licensing requirements, we require that parents submit a doctor's certificate and immunization record, for each child, upon enrollment. These records are kept on file at the school and must be updated annually. If you want to exempt your child from vaccinations, you must provide the State of Texas form for vaccine requirement exemptions.

The school does not require employees to have immunizations, but we do cover the cost of immunizations for flu and DTap. The school does have a provider that comes to each location in the Fall of each year and will give the flu vaccination for no cost to the employee or the employee may obtain the flu vaccine and/or DTap immunization at local providers and the cost will be reimbursed.

Hearing and Vision Screening Requirements

The state requires that all children 4 years old and over have hearing and vision screening annually. We must have a statement from your child's doctor stating that they have done the testing, or the parent may sign up for the testing that we have administered periodically at the school.

Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Open year-round January through December.

Holidays

New Year's Day

Memorial Day

Fourth of July

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Day and day after Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Eve (possibly the Friday before or Monday after if it falls on a weekend)

Christmas Day

When a traditional holiday falls on a weekend, we observe the holiday in accordance with the national Monday Holiday Bill. Because our tuition is set on an annual basis, there is no reduction in tuition for holidays.

Morning Arrival

The school opens at 6:30am. For insurance reasons and also so we may prepare for the day parents may not leave their children before this time. When using the circular driveway, please pull to the right side leaving the left side open for people that are leaving. If you like to spend additional time with your child, you can park in the side parking lot. Please make sure that your child is next to you when you are going to or from your vehicle. Never leave children unattended in the car when coming into the school. We want everyone to be safe.

Please enter the school through the front door. All children must be left in the presence of a staff member and parents must sign their child in on the touch screen monitor. It is very important that your child is checked in and out. If you need help with this please see the office. Encourage independence by letting your child walk into the classroom, rather than being carried. Have them help by carrying their belongings and putting them in the appropriate spot.

When entering the classroom please remember to speak in a low voice. Greetings and good byes across the classroom make it difficult to maintain order and concentration. A brief entrance and departure in the morning is recommended for parents of toddlers and older children. Our teachers want to give children their full attention; if you have any questions or concerns about your child feel free to call between 12:30 and 2:00 or ask the teacher for a conference. Your child's teacher will be more than happy to discuss your child's progress. We encourage all parents to arrive by 9:00am when class and work time begin. If you do occasionally arrive late please stop by the office and have someone escort your child to the classroom, so they can integrate the child into the class work without disturbing the teacher's curriculum.

Meeting the Child's Needs

Infants – Please bring everything your baby will need, such as formula, baby food, wipes, diapers and changes of clothes. An infant care sheet must be filled out upon enrollment and updated once a month.

Breastfeeding – Mothers have a right and are welcome to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in our care. Human milk is the best source of milk for infants. Additionally, breastfeeding supports optimal health and development. Our infant room has a rocker to provide a comfortable place to breast feed in the infant room or we will make a back office (with shuttered windows) available if privacy is preferred or if your child is older and in another classroom. A refrigerator is available for storage of expressed breast milk.

Safe Sleep for Infants 12 months old or Younger

Always Give Babies Room to Breathe! Hundreds of Texas babies die in their sleep each year - suddenly, unexpectedly, and without a clear explanation or due to accidental suffocation or strangulation. That's why it is so important to always give babies "Room to Breathe."

The ABC's of Infant sleep:

A - Sleep Alone: Put babies to sleep alone with no other adult or child sharing the sleep surface

B - On their Backs with no blankets or bedding: Babies should sleep on their backs in a crib or on another firm surface. The surface should be clear of all objects except for a mattress, tight-fitting bottom sheet, and the baby. If the baby leaves an impression on the mattress, the surface is too soft.

C - In a Crib and cool (70 degrees): Dress your baby lightly and keep the room cool.

S - In a Smoke free environment: Keep babies away from second hand smoke. It's bad for everyone and especially babies. Never smoke in a house with a baby and ask anyone who cares for your baby not to smoke around them.

Things to Avoid

1. Don't put anything in the crib! Adding bumper pads, blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals to your baby's sleep surface can greatly increase the risk of suffocation or strangulation. Additional mattresses or cushions in a crib or play yard (i.e. Pack 'n Play) are risky too. Some surfaces may feel hard or thin, but they are made to keep your baby safe while they sleep. Your baby will be comfortable.
2. Keep blankets or covers away from baby's face.
3. Don't let a baby sleep or nap with adults or other children.
4. Don't ever sleep with a baby if you have been drinking or are taking medications or illegal drugs.
5. If you get sleepy, put the baby down in a crib or another firm surface before you take a nap. This is especially important if you are sitting on a chair, sofa or other comfortable surface where you might roll over on your baby and suffocate him or her.
6. Don't leave your baby sleeping in a car seat or bouncers or similar device. Small babies can't hold their heads up and may suffocate if they fall asleep in a sitting position.

Toddlers – We ask that toddlers have a small backpack with two complete changes of clothing and a supply of disposable diapers or training pants and wipes. Please try to wean toddlers from bottles and pacifiers. In a classroom environment, it is difficult to keep other children from putting them in their mouth and to keep nipples sanitary. If your child is toilet learning please bring additional underwear and clothing to help us with this process.

Older Children – Please send a small backpack or Ziploc bag with at least one complete change of clothes.

Clothing – We encourage independence; therefore, dress your child in clothing that is comfortable and easy for them to manage. For children that are potty learning it is essential that they wear clothing that they can pull up and down easily to make this process successful. Shoes must be soft soled (closed heels and toes) for the prevention of injuries. All clothing must be labeled with the child’s first and last name to prevent the loss of personal belongings. If you find an item missing, please notify us promptly. Unclaimed items are donated to charity periodically. Please take home wet or soiled clothing the same day.

Sunscreen – We have sunshades on our play areas. If you are concerned with further protection we ask that you apply sunscreen before bringing your child every morning.

Insect Repellent – Because of frequent flood waters and climate in Houston we do have mosquito control systems at both schools that do use chemicals to combat mosquitoes. The misters go off during the night and when children are not present.

We do not want to apply insect repellent to children, but we will spray organic solutions provided by the parent that are labeled with the children’s name and the parent has signed the classroom sign-up sheet for this. We will not apply any products that contain DEET. We ask that only children who have a severe reaction to bites be signed up. Having a handful that do have the organic spray can protect others, but also, if too many have this spray on when they return to the classroom the smell can be overwhelming.

The schools have mister systems for the control of mosquitos maintained by ABC Pest Control. For further information please see

<https://www.abchomeandcommercial.com/houston/pest-control/mosquito-control>

Personal Belongings – We provide all learning materials. Children may bring a stuffed animal or blanket for naptime that makes them feel more secure, but we cannot launder them or be responsible for them. Please DO NOT allow your children to bring toys, candy, gum, balloons or money to school.

Meals & Food Service

We have a commercially licensed kitchen and have hot lunches available. It is important that the children eat a nutritious breakfast and lunch to ensure that they will have the most enjoyable day possible. We want the children to be able to focus on their work and to reach their fullest potential. Your cooperation with this is most appreciated. Our menu for lunch and snacks is available. Parents may provide snacks and lunch if they request to do so.

Breakfast – A good wholesome breakfast is important. If you arrive before 8:00am you may bring a nutritious breakfast, or pay an extra fee for our breakfast, and we will serve it. Please try to avoid donuts, cookies and high sugar items. If you are to arrive after that time please feed your child breakfast before you bring them to school.

Morning Snack - We provide a morning and afternoon snack. The morning snack is substantial enough to hold a child's appetite until lunch if he ate a balanced breakfast that morning.

Lunch – is equally as important as breakfast. Hot lunches may be purchased for an additional fee. Our menu is designed to meet or exceed the state required nutrition guidelines and to appeal to children. You may have your child bring a toothbrush labeled with permanent marker (and a brush holder) and they may brush their teeth after lunch. Some children love this practice and some do not want to brush. We will encourage them but they will not be forced to brush. Let your teacher know if this is important to you.

You may bring a sack lunch, instead of having our lunch, but we do ask that you send a nutritious lunch and refrain from sending high sugar foods. It has been our experience that those children who eat empty nutrient foods and sweets are those who have a more difficult day. If you do send lunch please:

- Label lunch kits using tape or permanent marker.
- Have your child help select and pack appropriate foods for their lunch. This often leads to them eating better and enjoying it more.
- We provide milk and glasses for lunch. We encourage the children to drink from glasses, rather than sippy cups.
- If your child does not eat very well, please speak with the teacher about concerns in this area.
- Please no red or purple juice drinks (it leaves permanent stains on our carpet).
- We ask that children not bring peanuts, peanut butter or peanut based items because we have children that have severe peanut allergies.

Afternoon Snack – is served shortly after the children awake from nap (around 2:30 or 3:00pm). A second afternoon snack may be served around 4:30 or 5:00. The second snack is something light to hold them until dinnertime. Usually it is a few pretzels or crackers.

Nap Time

Younger children who are at school after 12:00 will lie down to rest for at least 30 minutes daily. Primary children who are old enough not to require a nap and who function well in the afternoon class will be allowed to attend extended day class. Extended day class is very important because it is a crucial learning time for children in their Kindergarten year; therefore, we do not allow children in the class who disrupt curriculum. Children still sleeping at 2:45 will be awakened.

Outside Time

Children will have playtime outside daily in the morning and the afternoon. Houston weather is so varied from morning to afternoon, dressing in layers is the best solution for the changes. Please send a sweater, coat or jacket and a hat so that your child may play comfortably outside in cool weather. Be sure to label all of these items. Some parents would prefer that their children be kept inside if the weather is too hot

or too cold. We will try to accommodate this request; however, we are required to give children outside time and we are required to maintain ratios and may not always be able to honor your request.

Indoor and Outdoor Physical activity

The children benefit from physical activity and outdoor play each day, not only to help their muscle development and coordination, but also that release of energy helps their concentration during learning activities. Active play is scheduled for 30 minutes twice a day in the morning and afternoon. Outside time consists of running, climbing on play structures, active games. When weather will not allow outdoor time, play time may be parachute activities, dancing, yoga or other movement. Activities will happen in our fenced in playgrounds, in the classroom, or in an extra-curricular room.

Students will participate in indoor and outdoor physical activities daily (weather permitting). To ensure children are comfortable and safe during physical activities, we recommend the following:

- **Clothing:** Dress children in layers to adjust to weather changes. Please send a sweater, coat, jacket, layered clothing, and hat for cooler weather.
- **Footwear:** Sturdy, closed-toe and closed-heel shoes that support active play. Parents are requested to label all clothing items with their child's name.

We prioritize children's safety during extreme weather conditions. Outdoor play will be limited or prohibited based on the following criteria:

- **Too Hot:** Temperature exceeds 95°F or heat index is 100°F or higher
- **Too Cold:** Temperature falls below 40°F or wind chills are significantly lower
- **Other Conditions:** Severe weather warnings, high winds, heavy rain, or poor air quality

When extreme weather conditions restrict outdoor play, we will ensure that physical activity such as obstacle courses, dance sessions, and active play games continues indoors. We obtain data via Child Care Weather Watch funded by federal Health and Human Services.

Departure - Short day students will be picked up between 2:30 and 2:45pm. If your child is on a short-day program and they are still at the school at 3:00 there will be a \$5.00 late fee and an additional \$5.00 charge if they stay beyond 3:15 and \$5.00 for each hour after that.

All students must be picked up by 6:30pm. There is a late fee of \$2.00 per minute per child for parents who arrive after 6:30.

Release Procedures

Parents must sign their child out on the computer in the hallway. If the staff person in charge or teacher does not personally know the parent, they will be asked to show identification. At different times, we have to have substitutes or schedule changes. It may be inconvenient to show your identification, but it is for the children's safety. See "Safety and Security" for more information regarding release procedures.

The Montessori Classroom

Dr. Montessori believed that the years from birth through age six were more important in a person's life than those years spent in college. A child's early years are crucial to the development of self-esteem, self-confidence, and love of learning. The Montessori approach is designed to help the child build within

themselves the foundations for a lifetime of creative learning. A love of learning and confidence as an independent learner are prerequisites in a world of constant change.

The Montessori Program is based on self-directed, non-competitive activities that help the child develop self-esteem, confidence, and decision-making and problem-solving skills. The multi-age grouping promotes an atmosphere for helping and learning together. The Montessori teacher prepares the environment and guides the children so that they may progress at their own pace. The Montessori materials will guide your child not only to read and write, but to think creatively and abstractly when faced with challenges.

During work time children receive lessons with the whole class, in small groups and one on one. Children practice lessons that the teacher has given to them. The teacher observes the child's progress and skills with their independent work and uses these observations to personalize future lessons for the child. The Montessori method implemented through the prepared environment and lesson presentations are delivered in a sequence that leads to optimum success for each individual child.

Children have an opportunity to observe other children's lessons. This offers many more opportunities of learning for the child and also assists the teacher with knowledge of the child's interests for additional presentations. If you enter the classroom during work time, please understand that it may appear very casual; however, the children are very busy working.

Emphasis of Growth

- Independence and Problem Solving
- Enjoyment of Learning
- Skills in Oral Communication
- Respect for oneself and others
- Responsible Group Membership
- Development of Order, Concentration, and Coordination

Classroom Areas

The environment and atmosphere are designed to be conducive to learning and development. Montessori materials are arranged to be attractive and accessible to the children.

Practical Life – This area promotes care of self and environment, as well as orderliness, fine motor coordination, and self-confidence and concentration.

Sensorial – Your child will utilize their five senses and develop skills in sequencing, color discrimination, and gradation of various sizes, shapes, and colors.

Language – Your child will have an increase in vocabulary with the many enrichment activities available in the classrooms. Reading is introduced phonetically and many exercises encourage handwriting skills.

Math – The math experience begins with concrete activities in order to build a solid foundation in the basics of math. They will progress to more complex and abstract work.

Geography – Children will learn about the diverse world around them. They will make these discoveries using maps, land forms, and many other exciting avenues.

Science – Studies will include botany, zoology, geology, and astronomy.

Art – Montessori classrooms give children the power to create through many different mediums. The children will create with paint, collages, salt dough, and other things that encourage individuality and creativity. We always stress the beauty of the process used by the child, rather than the finished product.

Sharing – The Primary classes and the Bridge class have “show and tell” on Fridays. Children may bring objects from nature such as: rocks, shells, leaves, twigs, plants, flowers, dead insects, etc. Please do not send any toys or play items. They may also bring books, photographs, postcards, or other pictures. Make sure these items are labeled with the child’s name if you want them back. The children really enjoy sharing and it builds their confidence as they gain the ability to speak in front of the group.

Guidance and Discipline - Our goal is to help the child develop self-discipline. First, we must differentiate between discipline and punishment. Punishment is short-term, brings some satisfaction to the adult, but has no long-range educational goals for the child. Discipline on the other hand, is designed to alter behavior and has as its goal long range effects through education of the child. The goal is for the child to learn and display self-discipline.

Our classrooms have certain rules. For example, materials are to be handled carefully, “inside” or quiet voices are used, and children must walk instead of run, respect for each other’s work is important as well as respect for the individual person. Physical means of handling anger or disagreement are inappropriate, and discussions of feelings are encouraged. If a child clearly understands these rules and refuses to cooperate, that is their prerogative. However, certain consequences will follow. The teacher may first try to distract the child from the negative behavior and direct them to a productive activity. If they persist in the behavior the teacher may have them move around the room holding their hand and restricting freedom. They observe other children doing lessons and they often become interested in an activity. Once a child understands how cooperative behavior will benefit them, he can begin to move toward self-discipline.

We believe in the following principals and will apply them in a manner appropriate to each child’s age, developmental level, and maturity.

- Each child is a precious and important individual who deserves to feel good about him or herself
- Children need opportunities to learn responsibility and fully understand the consequences of their actions.
- Children need limitations that are consistently enforced.
- When a child exhibits inappropriate behavior, a positive approach to redirecting that child is most effective.

- Children need opportunities that allow them to make appropriate choices.
- Placing blame or shame on children is detrimental for their psychological well-being.

Discipline and Guidance Procedure:

1. Positive behavior is reinforced as a means of discouraging inappropriate behavior.
2. Physical punishment is not used under any circumstances.
3. Rest, food, or toilet training is never associated with punishment or reward.
4. Removal from a situation and loss of privileges, are methods we use for disciplinary purposes as each situation dictates. We use natural and logical consequences. In cases of extreme difficulties with any child, the staff will document the incident as reference for objective discussion with the child's parents.

Enough emphasis cannot be placed on the importance of consistency in discipline. Rules must be reasonable and agreed upon by the adults. A rule cannot exist one day and be unimportant the next. Adults lose credibility and the child is confused. It is also important to follow through when a statement is made; otherwise nothing is taken seriously.

It is a violation of state minimum standards to allow physical punishment on school premises. We must insist that parents refrain from physical punishment or disciplining in a manner which is inconsistent with our policies while on the school property. If you need help in redirecting your child, please ask a staff member to assist you.

The school reserves the right to refuse the enrollment of any child or to ask parents to make alternative arrangements for the care of a child enrolled if we are unable to provide the environment that the child needs, or are unable to manage their behavior. We will also ask for other arrangements if parents do not work with us in a positive manner.

Parent Involvement

Five Star Montessori school is your child's home away from home. We want your child to feel safe and secure here, and we want you to feel welcome at any time as long as it does not interfere with the classrooms. Parents may observe classrooms and activities on the monitors in the office at any time and they may inspect the building, premise or equipment at any time without having to secure prior approval. Teachers coordinate special events and activities. Please ask your child's teacher if you would like to participate in them.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held as a means of giving parents an overview of their child's developmental progress. These conferences also enable parents and staff to work closely to meet each child's specific needs. They will be held semi-annually for the older classrooms or as the parent, teacher or Director requests. We do ask that you refrain from discussing any problems related to your child in their presence unless the teacher or Director requests it.

The Director has an open-door policy and welcomes your comments and suggestions. We maintain a bulletin board in the entrance hallway, any news or changes to policy will be posted there as well as being available on our website and in the parent Handbook. Contact the office at any time to discuss or review any concerns or questions about the policies and procedures of our school.

Birthday Celebrations - Every child's birthday calls for a special celebration. We have a special way of celebrating Birthdays at Five Star. It is much different than a traditional American Birthday, but that is what makes it so special. This celebration is much more conducive to the classroom environment and sharing with our friends.

The following are things that we would like for you to bring for your child's birthday:

- A photograph at each year of your child's life (at age 1, age 2, etc.) mounted on a poster.
- A short description of the photo, what your child was doing or what they liked at that age.
- Optional - The Birthday Child may bring a book wrapped as a Birthday gift to give to the class in honor of their birthday. Record the child's name and birth date in the cover of the book.
- Optional - You may bring a special snack to share. We request you bring a fruit or vegetable tray or muffins. You will be surprised how much the children will like it. Please do not bring birthday cake, cupcakes, drinks, balloons, party favors, hats or horns.
- Food items must come from an authorized food source (Krogers, Sams, Randalls), anyplace that has a food license) per city of Houston Health Department.

The Birthday Celebration:

- Usually at the morning line time - the children form a circle around a sun.
- The teacher announces the event and shares the photos and dialogue about the photos with the children.
- Each time a photo, which represents a year is described the birthday child walks around the sun, holding a globe of the Earth. The class sings a jingle as the child circles the sun one time for each year of the child's life.
- The class sings "Happy Birthday to You".
- The gift (a book) is opened by the birthday child and read to the class (sometimes later in the day).
- The birthday child helps with the special snack they brought to share.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness in this celebration. Please talk to your child's teacher prior to their birthday.

Procedures for Supporting Inclusive Services to Children with Special Needs

Whenever possible we will provide a child with special care needs with the accommodations recommended by a health-care professional; or a qualified professional affiliated with the local school district or early childhood intervention program;

We will utilize as recommended any adaptive equipment that has been provided to the center for a child's use; ensure that a child who receives early intervention services or special education services can receive those services from a qualified outside service provider at our operation, with parental request and approval; ensure that activities integrate children with and without special care needs; and ensure that caregivers adapt equipment and procedures and vary methods as necessary to ensure that we care for a child with special needs in a natural environment.

Suspension and Expulsion

In general, the school is very open to working with parents regarding behaviors and needs of a child. We require that parents work with us in a positive manner and take time to meet with us if it is requested.

We will take all reasonable steps to move a child in a positive direction.

A child may be expelled by the School without prior notice, if in the sole opinion of the School, it is in the best interest of the child **or** in the best interest of the School to expel the child.

Parent Discord – The school is a safe haven for your child. If parents are going through a custody battle or any legal proceedings they will not involve the school or allow their attorney to subpoena any staff. We are here for your child, not to make any judgment about parent's abilities. If we believe that a child is in danger we will call Child Protective Services, as is required by law.

Medication Policy

Each day that a child is required to take medication at the center, parents must sign up for it on our "Medication Authorization Form." According to state licensing requirements, the medication must be kept in its original container and clearly state the following information: the child's name, doctor's name, prescribed dosage, and date. We maintain dated records with the name of the staff person who administered the medication. Please pick up your medicine after it is no longer required. We routinely give medications at 11:00am and 3:00pm. If a different time is required please speak with Administration.

All over the counter medication (such as Tylenol, Dimetapp, etc.) requests must match the recommended dosage on the label. Most contain a disclaimer to consult a physician for children under 2 years old. We cannot administer these medicines without a signed doctor's statement with the date, the child's name and dosage if a child is under 2 years old. We will not administer more than the recommended dosage on the label for children over 2 years old unless prescribed by a physician. Please do not leave any type of medicine in your child's bag.

Inhalators and Breathing Machines – We strongly encourage parents to administer inhalators and breathing machines themselves. However, if you need our staff to do it you must sign a complete waiver of liability and explain the procedure in detail to the administrative staff person who is to administer the treatment.

Policies Regarding Sick Children – Health Check – Illness and Exclusion Criteria

While we take precautions to protect your child against illnesses, most children experience a normal number of infections and illnesses throughout the year. We follow all the state guidelines regarding sick children.

If a child has a sign or symptom of illness or injury or change in behavior the teacher or assistant will call the office for health check. The administrative person will take the child's temperature, do a visual check of any symptoms and talk to the child (if they are verbal). A child with contagious disease or an undiagnosed rash will be sent home and parents are asked to consult a physician before having the child return to school. Please call the school to let us know of any contagious disease so we can be cautious and observant of others that may display similar symptoms.

In some cases, doctor's releases and/or legal waivers may be required for your child to return to school.

Your child should not come to school if they have a temperature, upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, undiagnosed rash or contagious disease. Please call the school to inform us that your child is ill.

Fever – A child who has a fever is probably contagious and should not come to school or be medicated to lower or mask their fever. Parents will be asked to take a child home if the child has a fever of 100 degrees under the arm temperature. If a child enters the school and is known to have had a fever during the previous 24 hours, the staff may take the child's temperature to determine admission.

If your child becomes ill at school we will call you to pick up your child. A child may be sent home because of any of the aforementioned symptoms or if they have symptoms that prevent the child from participating comfortably in school activities. Also, children with an undiagnosed rash other than mild diaper rash or heat rash or a communicable disease are required to have a doctor's statement before readmission. We cannot emphasize too strongly the need for parents to inform the office in writing of any change of telephone numbers during the year. We must be able to contact someone at all times in case of an emergency.

Re-admittance to the school for the following communicable diseases shall be:

Chickenpox – all lesions are dry and crusted.

Hand, Foot and Mouth – Fever is gone and mouth sores are healed.

Impetigo – at least 24 hours after the start of medication. If there is no improvement in 48 hours, the child should be reassessed by a physician.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye) – at least 24 hours after the start of medication AND no drainage present.

Lice and Scabies – following medical treatment and removal of all eggs.

Hepatitis – physician’s statement required for re-admittance.

Procedures for Handling Medical Emergencies

As a general rule, we will call 911 and ask for help whenever someone is severely ill or hurt, and then contact the parent. If a child is ill or is injured, but not in imminent danger, we will get them comfortable and contact the parents or one of the emergency contacts if a parent cannot be reached. It is very important to keep all contact numbers we have on file current and updated.

Safety and Security

Safety is a responsibility that we take very seriously. Please, always accompany your child inside their classroom unless a staff member is available and offers to do so. If the class is outside, do not leave your child unattended in the classroom. Take them outside to their teacher.

The center will release children only to those persons designated on the child’s enrollment sheet. The staff requires proper identification from any unfamiliar persons authorized to pick up a child. If that person’s name is not on your child’s enrollment sheet, we will call you immediately for verification. Written notification is required for the addition of authorized persons. If there is a last-minute change, you may call and you will be asked your family code word so that we can identify you. We will not release a child to anyone who appears to be impaired by alcohol or any other substance.

We have an access control system for entry into the center. We have electronically monitored fire alarm and security systems. The playground is completely fenced in and has two exits.

Fire Drills and Evacuation Procedures are done in accordance with State requirements, we have monthly fire drills. While this may be inconvenient and unsettling for some children, it is crucial for the safety of the children that they learn proper emergency evacuation procedures. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. We have a severe weather radio and scanner in the office and are able to keep abreast of developing situations. If the children need to be relocated due to an emergency the relocation site will be posted at our building. We recommend that you practice fire drills at home.

Emergency Dismissal

Occasionally Houston has flash flood warnings and other severe weather conditions. Five Star will be closed on any day that the local school district has cancelled school because of weather conditions; or if public school is not in session the school will be closed if city employees are excused from work. As with any missed days, tuition cannot be refunded for missed days due to weather.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Staff Responsibilities

Every staff person has the moral, ethical and legal responsibility to care for and protect the children in which we have been entrusted. In the case of an emergency large or small, staff may not leave the

children in their time of need. Many of our staff have family and children of their own, but in any case, they will have to trust that their children's school or caregivers will take care of them as we will take of the children entrusted in our care.

Director or Administrative person in charge:

1. Verify information
2. Call 911 if necessary
3. Seal off high-risk area
4. Notify staff using the all-page button on phone system or proceed to verbally notify each classroom
5. Notify the Executive Director
6. Keep detailed notes of crisis event

Staff assigned to a classroom:

1. Verify information
2. Lock classroom exterior doors, unless evacuation orders are issued
3. Account for all students
4. Warn students if it is appropriate and reassure them.
5. If evacuation is required follow procedures as practiced in fire drills. Keep your class together, ensure all students are accounted for and are in your group, take the classroom binder with you.

Kitchen staff and floaters:

Report to the office to be assigned a task or if the school is in process of being evacuated go immediately to the infant room to help with evacuation.

Tornado-

1. Monitor Emergency Alert Station, or local weather stations via internet, radio.
2. Bring all persons inside building. Close windows and blinds.
3. Review Tornado drill procedures and location of safe areas. Tornado safe areas are under desks and in hallways away from windows and large rooms.
4. Review "drop and tuck" procedures with students.

(Tornado watch has been issued near school or Tornado has been spotted.)

1. Move students and staff to safe area.
2. Remind teachers to take class rosters.
3. Account for all students.
4. Remain in safe area until warning expires or until emergency personnel have issued an all clear signal.

Fire-

1. Pull fire alarm.
2. Evacuate students and staff to a safe distance outside of building.
3. Follow normal fire drill route. Follow alternative route if normal route is too dangerous.
4. Teachers take class rosters, and take count of children before exiting the room.
5. Director notifies authorities (call 911), and Executive Director. Director or Executive Director must report incident to Fire Marshall.
6. Teachers take roll call after being evacuated (outside).
7. Students may be moved to shelter if building is uninhabitable.
8. No one may reenter the building(s) until building(s) is declared safe by fire or police personnel.
9. Director notifies student and staff of termination of emergency, and school resumes normal operations.

Gas and/or hazardous material leak - There are no gas lines on the property (either location), any threat would be coming from the street, public easement or another property.

1. Assess incident.
2. Call 911
3. Notify Executive Director
4. Follow procedures for sheltering or evacuation.
5. Notify parents if students are evacuated.
6. Resume normal operations after consulting with fire personnel.

(If incident occurs near school property, follow fire personnel's recommendations such as sheltering and evacuation and follow steps 7 and 8.

Intruder/Dangerous Individual-

1. Notify Director, Administration.
2. Ask another staff person to accompany you before approaching the intruder.
3. Politely greet the unidentified person and introduce yourself. Ask person the purpose of his/her visit.
4. Inform person that all visitors must register at the front office. If person's purpose is not legitimate, ask him/her to leave. Accompany person to front exit.
5. If person refuses to leave:
 - a. warn person of consequences for staying on school property. Inform him/her that the police will be called.
 - b. notify police if person still refuses to leave. Give police full description of person.
 - c. walk away from person if he/she indicates a potential for violence. Be aware of person's actions at this time (where he/she are in the building, whether he/she is carrying a weapon or package, etc.)
 - d. Director notifies Executive Director and may issue a "locked down" procedures (See below. If person of concern is on property, but outside, all children and staff will return to inside of building and all exterior doors and windows will be locked. Administration will provide up to date information to all staff to keep them apprised of status of situation using "all page" on telephone system.

Missing Child Procedure-

Most importantly, always follow appropriate transition procedures to ensure that a child does not go missing.

1. Upon discovering that a child is missing, notify lead teacher immediately. If lead teacher is not available, you must inform the nearest teacher stating child's name, where child was last seen, what they were doing and how long since last saw the child.
2. Thereafter, they should assist with any organized search for the child, or supervision of the rest of the class as directed by the lead teacher and/or administration.
 - a. lead teacher and assistant will conduct a search of immediate surroundings either indoors or outdoors e.g. looking under tables, in bathrooms, closets, behind trees or bushes, etc.
 - b. call front office immediately if not found in classroom.
3. If the initial search does not locate child the teacher(s) will widen the search of the school buildings and grounds including public areas in other parts of the school.
 - a. at all times, the other classrooms must remain supervised. Administration/teachers will be responsible to organize adequate supervision.

4. If search does not find child in the building, Administration utilizing admins, kitchen staff and floaters will proceed to search property around building to inspect all sides starting from front and meeting in playground area in the back. If there is still no indication of child, staff will come inside to front office to report.

(In this circumstance, it is appropriate for members of staff to go beyond the school property boundaries to retrieve a child who has accidentally wandered off property, and to follow/retrieve a child with special care needs.)

*When a missing child is located and determined to be safe, the Director will conduct an investigation into the circumstance of the child going missing and address strategies to take steps to prevent possibility of occurring in the future. Administration will notify parents. Administration will notify State Licensing of incident.

Relocation Procedures-

West Houston Location:

If children need to be relocated they will be relocated to Daily Elementary.
12909 Briar Forest Drive, Houston, TX 77077
(281) 368-2111

Katy Location:

If children need to be relocated they will be relocated to Church of the Rock.
433 Barker Cypress Rd. Houston, TX 77094
281-599-9777

The children will walk by classroom, with care taken to account for each child at every transition point. Non-walking children will be transported with bye-bye buggy and evacuation cribs. Necessary medical equipment and supplies will be transported on kitchen carts.
Notify Executive Director and notify parents via text or email.

Child Abuse or Neglect

According to the Texas Family Code and Board Policy FFG(LEGAL), any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical and mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a verbal report within 48 hours to the Child Protective Services division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400) or any local or state law enforcement agency. Education Code 38.004, Family Code 261.101.

Gang-Free Zones

Section 71.028 of the Penal Code establishes gang-free zones which include schools, institutions of higher education, public or private youth centers, playgrounds, shopping malls, movie theaters, public swimming pools, video arcades, and school buses. A person 17 years of age or older who commits certain offenses (for school-related purposes) in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any real property that is

owned, rented, or leased by a school or school board or on a school bus may be assessed a punishment that is increased to the next highest category of offense (unless the offense is already classified as a felony in the first degree). The gang-free zones apply if a person commits or conspires to commit certain offenses with the intent to establish, maintain, or participate in a combination or in the profits of a combination or as a member of a criminal street gang as specified in Section 71.02, Penal Code (organized criminal activity). These offenses include capital murder, arson, aggravated robbery, deadly conduct, assault with bodily injury; unlawful manufacture, transportation, repair or sale of firearms or prohibited weapons; or any offense listed in Chapter 43, Penal Code (public indecency) depicting or involving conduct by or directed toward a child younger than 18 years of age. Penal Code 71.02.

Smoke Free Environment

Five Star Montessori is a smoke free environment. Smoking is strictly prohibited on the property; this includes the parking lot and driveway.

Financial Policies

Tuition is paid through our automatic tuition express service. Tuition and other fees must be paid in full without deduction for absences of any duration or for any cause, and without substitution of other days of attendance as “make up” days. Staffing and other operational costs are incurred on the basis of fixed enrollment, and few of these costs are eliminated when one child is absent. Your child’s tuition is based on the program that you choose for your child.

If your child moves to another class with a different tuition, no mid-month adjustments are made. You will be billed the new tuition rate in the following month.

If you want to change your child’s schedule, please be aware that there is only a limited number of 2- and 3-day spaces available. Please do not assume that you may reduce your child’s schedule at any time. Your child’s position may be a full-time position and when we have full time students on our waiting list we cannot allow that position to go to a part time position.

Supply Fee (and AMS fee if applicable) – Are non-refundable annual activity fees billed in August for classroom supplies, art and craft items, and other supplies.

Deposits – A non-refundable deposit is required at the time of enrollment. The deposit will be applied to the child’s last month of tuition, if written notice of withdrawal is provided more than 30 days in advance.

Sibling Discounts – Families enrolling more than one child in a full-time program will receive a 10 percent discount on the tuition of the second and additional children that are enrolled. The discount will be given to the lesser amount of tuition.

Absences and Vacation – The school bases its operating costs on annual tuition projections. In order to continually ensure the highest quality of personnel, equipment and supplies, we cannot offer tuition reductions for absences or vacations.

Late Fee – Students must be picked up by 6:30 p.m. There is a late fee for parents who arrive after 6:30. If a child is left at the center for more than one hour after closing and no emergency contacts can be reached, legal authorities may be contacted. If your child is on a short-day program and they remain at the school after 3:00pm, you will be billed a late fee plus a fee for each hour or partial hour after that.

Other Charges – A \$25 charge will be assessed for returned checks or ACH. A second returned check will result in altered payment terms. Additional charges may be assessed for shirts, photography, hearing and eye exams, etc. These are offered on an optional basis. Extra-Curricular Activities such as Gymnastics, Yoga, Soccer or Dance are also optional with an additional charge.

In-Home Babysitting

Five Star does not render childcare services off its premises. We do not allow staff to arrange with parents for off-premises care. Staff are selected and retained only on the basis of their fitness for rendering child care services in a controlled and fully-supervised child care program. Five Star offers no assurance of the fitness of its staff members for performing these and other services in an environment which is not professionally supervised (such as transporting children or caring for them in your home), and none should be implied or inferred under any circumstances.

Transportation

We do not normally transport children younger than 5 years old. We do transport children 5 and older to and from public elementary school to our after-school program and on field trips during the summer.

Field Trips

We do have summer field trips for children 5 years and older that are enrolled in our summer programs. We will post notice of any field trips at least 48 hours in advance.

Water Activities

We do not have a pool on the premises and we don't plan field trips to swim. We may do water activities in a water table and in the summer, we may have splash days with sprinklers.

Animals

If we have a visitor who is sharing animals with the children we will post it 48 hours in advance on the bulletin board in the front hallway.

Minimum Standards and Reporting

Parents may review a copy of minimum standards and our most recent licensing inspection at any time. Both of these are available in our office and on the state website. The local licensing office may be contacted at 713-940-3009. PRS child abuse hotline is 1-800-252-5400. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Safety's website is www.dfps.state.tx.us. Our licensing report is there as well as the State Minimum Standards.

Preventing and Responding to Abuse or Neglect of Children

We are providing the following information as well as specific one hour of training for our staff to increase awareness. There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. We are providing the following information and will communicate further awareness and prevention information through our newsletters and blogs.

Recognizing Abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Child Abuse and Neglect: Protection and Prevention Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area

- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problem.

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) manages community-based programs that prevent delinquency, abuse, neglect and exploitation of Texas children; helps communities enhance services provided through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; assists communities in identifying prevention and early intervention needs, and supports the development of, and modifications to, new and existing programs designed to prevent or reduce poor outcomes for children, youth and their families.

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp

If you need help as a parent of a child who is a victim of abuse.

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Investigations/parents_guide_to_investigation.asp

State law requires anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to report those suspicions to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) or to a local law enforcement agency. Five Star will report and coordinate with child protective services any suspected abuse.

Always call law enforcement first and the Texas Abuse Hotline second if you suspect that there is an immediate threat of harm or death to a child.

Any person making a report to DFPS is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in good faith. The reporter's name is also confidential and will not be provided directly to the accused person by any DFPS employee. There are circumstances under which

DFPS is required to disclose a reporter's identity to law enforcement, a court of law, or another state agency.

A person who suspects child abuse or neglect, but fails to report it, can be charged with a misdemeanor or state jail felony. Remember, reporting suspected child abuse or neglect makes it possible for a child to get help. Report child abuse or neglect in two ways:

Telephone

Internet

1-800-252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org

The policies and procedures of Five Star are subject to change in whole or in part at any time. We will notify parents immediately of any significant change.