

First Lutheran School

Student - Parent

Handbook

2026 - 2027



**2231 Broadway
Helena, MT 59601
406.442.6913**



School Mascot - First Lutheran Flames

The Flames represent the Spirit of God ablaze and burning, in our hearts.

School Colors - Red and White

The Red represents the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross, for us, to remove our sin.

The White represents that Jesus is sinless, forgives our sins, and makes us pure/white as snow.

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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL FIRST LUTHERAN SCHOOL FAMILIES

STAFF

First Lutheran School is accountable to the First Lutheran School Advisory Committee, the Mission and Ministry Council, and the Congregation. The director establishes and communicates policy with advise and guidance from the school advisory committee. The director carries out committee policy and supervises day-to-day operation of the school. The teachers are responsible for planning and implementing the program and for daily classroom management. The director creates a list of qualified substitutes for teachers to call in the case of absence.

School Phone Number: 442-6913
E-mail address for First Lutheran School:

Web site: www.firstlutheranhelena.org
school@firstlutheranhelena.org

SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Voting Members: Tammy Anderson
Darcy Goodson
Melanie Middlebrook
John Stelter
Kathy Winslow

Non-Voting Members: Pastor Miller
Susan Taylor

SCHOOL STAFF

Teachers and Staff:

- Prekindergarten Monday through Friday – Lori Radtke
- Get Set Monday through Friday- Shannon Champagne
- Director – Susan Taylor

MISSION STATEMENT

Sharing God’s Word with Everyone, Everywhere:

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, First Lutheran School provides a quality academic education rooted in God’s Word and encourages a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

PURPOSE

Partnered with the home, First Lutheran School seeks the following goals:

- Imparting Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior, to children and their families.
- Teaching God’s Word.
- Encouraging responsibility and concern for others out of love for Christ.
- Teaching secular subjects in the light of God’s Word.
- Striving for excellence in teaching the curriculum.
- Promoting appreciation and respect for God’s gift of nature.

- Fostering the joy of learning.
- Giving children an opportunity to live their faith in daily Christian fellowship and life situations.
- Teaching children to use their time, talents, and treasures to glorify God.
- Building Christian character that values authority, respects others, and enables children to become responsible citizens and leaders.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE:

1. **Scripture Alone:** The Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is His message to all people. The entire Bible points to Jesus as the Savior.
2. **Grace Alone:** People cannot save themselves by their good works or restore themselves to a right relationship with God. This Grace is given by God alone.
3. **Faith Alone:** God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world. He is both true God and true man. He lived to fulfill God's law for us, died on the cross to pay the penalty our sins deserved, and rose from the dead so that we might have eternal life. He ascended into heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us.
4. We are called as Christians to tell others that the only way of salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ and to show our faith by our deeds of love towards others.

PROGRAM

Child development research and experience has taught us that children develop individually through their daily experiences. They develop physically by running, jumping, hopping, squeezing, pouring and manipulating different kinds and sizes of objects. Children develop socially by learning to take turns, share, cooperate, talk, listen, and act out their roles. They develop emotionally by learning to verbalize their feelings and express their feelings through appropriate behavior. Children develop intellectually through new experiences.

Spiritual development is fostered in all of these areas by activities that show God's own love and kindness and in specific ways that are meaningful to children such as prayer, songs, stories and worship, including chapel time with the Pastor and School Director.

The daily schedule, weekly activities, and learning units are planned to provide for growth experiences in all areas. Each preschool and prekindergarten day includes free play with learning activities and socialization time, teacher and student initiated activities, stories, worship, music, a snack, and outdoor play or indoor large muscle activity. Added to this format in the prekindergarten class, are readiness activities in reading and math.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

First Lutheran School admits students of every race, color, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Please see Appendix A for the complete non-discrimination policy.

Each student must be the appropriate age of the class he/she is enrolled in on or before the first day of that school year. Once the school year has started, children will be accepted on individual cases after speaking with the teacher and director.

Children of members of First Lutheran Church will be given first consideration. Children currently enrolled in First Lutheran School will be given next consideration. Other applicants will be accepted as space permits.

To enroll your child in preschool or pre-kindergarten complete the enrollment form and the following steps:

1. Complete and return the registration form to the director and pay the non-refundable registration fee.
2. Present a birth certificate and proof of “up to date” immunization for the child.
3. Complete health and emergency data/treatment forms.

FEE STRUCTURE (revised 1/8/26)

Upon admission to First Lutheran School, a non-refundable registration fee must be paid. This fee reserves space for your child and purchases materials for the upcoming year. A new registration fee will be required each year. There is no reduction of the registration fee regardless of the date of admission.

Tuition is due the 1st of each month for nine months. The first payment is due September 1st^{and} not later than September 5th. The last payment is due May 1st. Make checks payable to **First Lutheran Church**. Tuition is needed to cover expenses and prompt payment is expected. There will be a \$25.00 late fee assessed on delinquent payments. There will also be a \$25.00 returned check charge. A one-month notice for withdrawal from school will be required. Further details are explained in the Parent Contract.

For any student whose tuition is seven (7) days delinquent, the parents will be contacted by the director, or her designee, to make payment arrangements. For any student whose tuition is one month delinquent, and where special arrangements have not been agreed upon in writing by the director or her designee, written notice will be sent to the parents. The notice will indicate that the student’s enrollment and attendance in the school will be discontinued within five (5) business days from the date the notice was sent. The student will not be allowed to re-enroll or attend or receive the education or other services until full payment of delinquent amounts, including late fees, have been paid in full, and upon written consent of the school board and director.

The above has been mutually agreed upon as per the parent contract.

School records for the student will not be released until all charges are paid in full. Please see Appendix B for the steps in the fees and tuition collection policy.

First Lutheran School offers partial tuition assistance in the form of scholarships and sponsorships which are funded solely through donations. Families can give donations to this program at any time, and you may contact the director if you wish to donate. If financial assistance is needed, please contact the director for the required forms. All information is kept confidential.

A 5% tuition discount is available for full tuition pre-payment by Sept. 15. Please contact the director for information.

THE SCHOOL DAY (revised 1/8/2026)

Get Set (3s/4s)	T/TH AM:	8:15 AM-11:15 AM
	M/W/F AM:	8:15 AM-11:15 AM
	M/W/F PM:	12:15 AM-3:00 PM
	M/W/F Both:	8:15AM-3:00 PM
	M-F AM or PM:	8:15-11:15 or 12:15-3:00
	M-F Both:	8:15 AM-3:00 PM
Prekindergarten	M-F AM:	8:15 AM-11:15 AM
	M-F PM:	12:15 PM-3:00 PM
	M-F Both:	8:15 AM-3:00 PM

For all classes, outside doors and classroom doors will be unlocked at 7:45 for early drop offs. Class begins at 8:15 AM.

STUDENT SECURITY AND SAFETY (revised 1/8/2026)

Student safety and security is our concern when your child is in attendance at First Lutheran School. The outside doors will be locked at 8:30 AM. If you need to access the building at other times during the school day, please enter the building through the church office door. It is important to identify yourself to someone in the office and to state the nature of your business, such as picking up your child. There is a bell located outside of the west side door of the building for secondary use in case the office is unattended.

Appendix E has more information on student security and safety. Appendix F has the policy for avoiding problems of abuse at First Lutheran School.

ARRIVAL AND AFTER SCHOOL DISMISSAL (revised 1/8/2026)

Children should be dropped off on time and picked up no later than 5 minutes after class time. No childcare is offered or provided between sessions. Families, who are delayed in picking up their child after 10 minutes, will cause the teaching staff to call a parent or emergency contact person for pickup and the child will attend after-care, at the rate of \$50, until someone is available for pick up.

Please follow the requested traffic flow plan in this document for entering and exiting the church property. Please come to the office when visiting the school.

IMPORTANT: The curb next to the building is designated a fire lane and is a no parking zone. This includes drop off and pick up times. Please park your car and walk your child into the classroom and park your car and walk to the sidewalks to pick up your children.

Because there is no supervision of the playground before or after school, children are expected to leave immediately unless they are waiting for transportation with a staff member of First Lutheran School.

Students will not be permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours without written permission from a parent or guardian. Please notify the office or your child’s teacher if someone

other than a parent or guardian will be picking up your child. Your child's safety is of highest concern.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICY

In order for students to receive the most from their educational experience, it is important for them to have regular attendance and arrive at school promptly. Please make every attempt to help your child have daily attendance and arrive on time. This helps develop good habits for your children. Regular attendance and punctuality develop dependability and responsibility in the student and contributes to their academic achievement.

If your child will be absent, please call the church office at (406)442-5367 or contact your child's teacher at the number provided by them. The teacher can then be notified not to expect your child that day.

ENTERING AND LEAVING SCHOOL

Children can enter through the south outside door (west of the office), the west end door or the office door. During the last few minutes of school, children will get their coats on, put their papers in their bags, and the teacher will bring them to the parking lot for dismissal time. Please wait for them there. If you need to pick your child up early, please come to the office before proceeding to the classroom. If someone else is picking your child up after school, please inform the teacher of this in writing. **Please avoid the outside stairs when ice or snow is present.**

CLOTHING

Please have your child dress for active play in easily washed clothes. We will go outdoors unless the temperature is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Please be sure your child is prepared; including coats, snow pants, boots, gloves and hats. Names on boots, gloves, hats, etc. are necessary. Have **ALL** clothing labeled with your child's name.

Children need to wear shoes suitable for running and climbing outdoors. Flip-flops and shoes with wheels are not safe. Please have your child wear appropriate shoes.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Children need a school bag or backpack with name clearly visible. A bag the child can open and close easily is best. Please bring it every day. A plastic grocery bag with handles works as well. An extra change of clothing, including socks is needed. It may be placed in a bag, marked with the child's name and should be left at school, in the child's personal classroom cubby. Additional supplies will be needed from time to time.

HEALTH

Illnesses spread easily in a classroom. If your child develops a fever, stomachache, etc., please keep him/her at home until the symptoms have cleared up. Children should be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school. All cases of contagious diseases should be promptly reported to the teacher. If a child should become ill at school or an accident occurs, parents or emergency contacts will be notified. In case of injury or sudden illness which warrants professional attention, the emergency medical plan will be activated.

Please call our school to notify the teacher of your child's absence when they are ill.

All children entering our school must have evidence of the necessary immunizations or legal exemptions. Medical histories and immunization records will be kept up to date in each child's permanent file. The Department of Public Health has listings of all required immunizations for entrance into school, or you can contact your health care provider about needed immunizations for entrance into school. A religious exemption is an option that is available. Please see the director in order to discuss the religious exemption. Please see Appendix G for the policy on Children's Health and School.

MEDICATION TO STUDENTS

Medication in the form of non-prescription drugs (aspirin, Tylenol, throat lozenges, etc.) will not be dispensed to students through the school office.

PARENTS: PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ADJUST DOSAGE TIMES SO THAT THEY DO NOT OCCUR DURING SCHOOL (i.e. before school, after school and at bed time). If it is absolutely not possible, please consider coming to school to administer the needed medication yourself, as parent/guardian. Thanks for your cooperation.

If your child requires an inhaler during the school day, please bring a doctor's note and a written, signed permission slip from you for the use of the inhaler and submit it to the teacher and notify the director.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Safety of the children is our concern at First Lutheran School. It is important to be prepared in case of an emergency. Regular emergency (fire, earthquake, intruder) drills are held throughout the year. Other emergency preparations may include how to handle hazardous leaks, loss of power, and government alerts. Please see Appendix H for First Lutheran School Emergency Procedures.

SCHOOL CLOSING FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER (revised 1/8/2026)

For the safety of all of our students, we may need to close the school due to inclement weather.

If Helena public school makes the decision to close due to inclement weather, First Lutheran School will follow that lead and also close our school. Parents are advised to check local media for closure announcements.

If the weather turns severe once the children are at school and it is necessary to close the school, the families will be called and asked to pick up their children, as soon as possible. The children will be kept safe in the building until families arrive for them.

HOLIDAYS AND CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

At First Lutheran School, we strive to honor our children and families. This includes how we may celebrate certain holidays.

The most important holidays to our Christian faith are Easter and Christmas. These holidays will be an integral part of the classroom teachings.

Some holidays, such as Halloween, may raise questions as to how, or if, we celebrate them. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) has no official statement or resolution about the observance of Halloween.

First Lutheran School believes that the parents or guardians have a vested interest in how each classroom celebrates holidays. The classroom teacher will communicate with the parents or guardians in advance of a holiday regarding the classroom plans for that holiday. After receiving this information, families will need to contact the classroom teacher to communicate any concerns about the classroom plans. This needs to be done well in advance of the holiday. After hearing from the families and taking into consideration the views of all, the teacher will decide how or if the class will celebrate the holiday.

WEAPONS POLICY

Students are not allowed to bring weapons or instruments of any kind to school that may inflict injury to fellow students. Any infraction in this regard will receive suitable disciplinary action, including confiscation of the item. This restriction includes pocket knives or a Leatherman. Please leave them at home.

GUIDANCE

A positive approach to discipline is followed. Children are familiarized with classroom expectations and learn acceptable behaviors. This is accomplished through positive reinforcements, redirection, natural and logical consequences, setting limits, and giving choices. Focus is placed on the action rather than the child in order to build self-esteem and a healthy self-concept. Through these methods, the children are learning life-long skills of decision making, expression of feelings, socialization with others, resolution of conflict and the acceptance of each other.

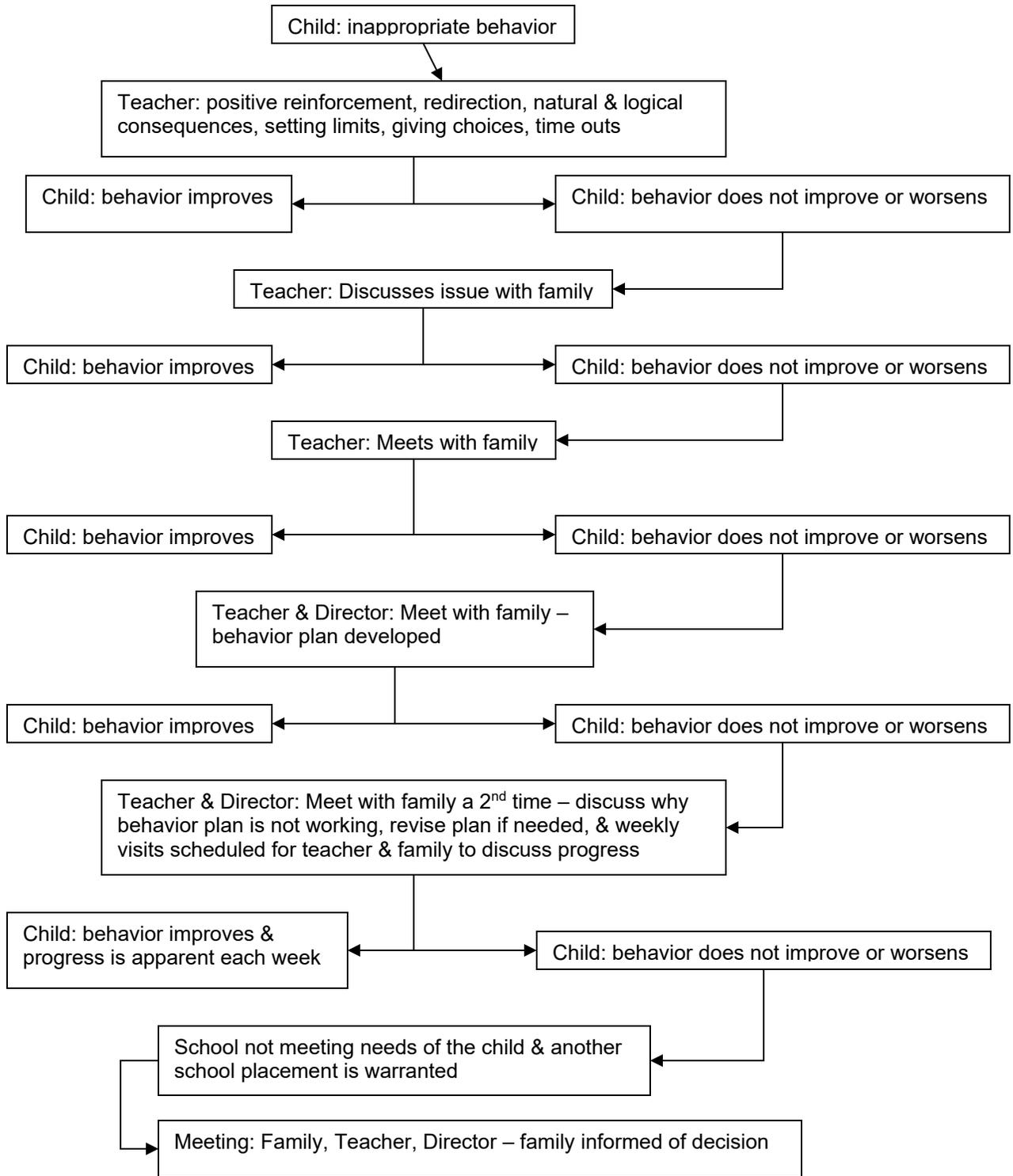
We have the wonderful opportunity to share Christ's love and forgiveness in our classrooms. From carrying on a conversation to settling a dispute, we are able to share how much God loves us and that through Jesus we may ask for and receive forgiveness. We like to share Christ's love when talking about feelings as well. Examples of this are: "God has given us so many wonderful things to share. It seems that Mary is sad that there are no blocks left for her to play with." Or, if a child says "You can't play with us. No girls allowed." We can respond, "God made all of us and God loves all of us." We want the children to know that God's love is unconditional and that one only needs to ask for forgiveness.

If conflict should occur between children, and the children cannot resolve the conflict amicably themselves, staff will:

- help the children identify their feelings and express them appropriately.
- help children listen to each other.
- assist children in problem-solving techniques.

Disciplinary matters will be shared with parents in a timely manner. Also, the school advisory committee will be involved and informed, as needed. Following is a flow chart that outlines the basic procedures in handling inappropriate behavior.

Some behavior matters may require other intervention. Severe aggression towards other children and /or staff will not be tolerated. At the first incidence of severe aggression, parents, teachers and the director will meet to develop a behavior plan to deal with the inappropriate behavior. If additional incidents occur, that group and a school advisory committee member will meet to determine the next course of action.



COMMUNICATION

In Matthew 18:15, we are admonished by the Lord to follow certain procedures when we have a disagreement with our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. Consequently, we expect parents and students to communicate forthrightly any problems or concerns regarding policies established at First Lutheran School. Please follow the proper line of authority in all dealings: Teacher, Director, and School Advisory Committee (as stated below in our grievance policy.)

GRIEVANCE POLICY

If any parent has a concern about a classroom or school matter, they should first take their concern in private to the person involved. Every attempt should be made to resolve whatever differences there may be at this step. The director may be involved as a third party only if the matter fails to be resolved at this point. If the first two steps fail to reach a satisfactory conclusion, disputes of a serious nature may be referred to the school advisory committee by the school director. As with any disputes among Christians, all discussions should be kept on a professional and high spiritual level. All parts of our school program, church, school and home should strive for harmony and unity of purpose.

THE GOLDEN RULE

First Lutheran School is committed to maintaining an academic environment in which all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect and which is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation and harassment. The school is prepared to take suitable action to prevent and correct any violations of this policy.

FUND RAISERS

Ongoing fund raising activities may be held each year. This is done to maintain the lower cost of tuition and to provide funds for special events and purchases. Annual fund raising events occur throughout the school year. The work of staff, school families and congregation members make these events successful.

VOLUNTEERING EXPECTATION (Revised 1/8/2026)

At First Lutheran School, we firmly believe in the importance of parental involvement in a child's school life above and beyond financial support. Parents of all students (Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten) are strongly encouraged to serve a minimum of 10 hours per family to the school during the school term. Parents who are unable to fulfill their commitment are requested to make a donation (\$20 per hour) to aid in maintaining the efforts of First Lutheran School.

First Lutheran School has a few fundraisers that need your help! Your involvement is key to making these events a success: Some examples of previous fundraisers are: **Annual dinner/auction, School Carnival, First Lutheran Spirit Sprint.**

Other volunteer activities are also very important and necessary.

Suggestions include but are not limited to:

- 1) Reading in the classroom
- 2) Making photocopies
- 3) Driving to and chaperoning on field trips
- 4) Folding letters for mailings
- 5) Helping in the children's library
- 6) Cleaning toys and other classroom implements.
- 7) Bulletin Boards
- 8) Social Media Administrator

GET SET/PREK – SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR GET SET/PREK FAMILIES
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TOILETING

Children attending Get Set classes at First Lutheran School shall be independent in their ability to toilet themselves. This means that they know when they need to use the toilet, get themselves to the bathroom in a timely manner, are able to successfully manipulate their clothing to accomplish toileting, and clean themselves. Teachers and parent helpers are available to assist in the process and help with the occasional accident but cannot provide continual one-on-one help. Parents are encouraged to discuss special concerns with staff.

SNACKS (revised 1/8/2026)

Parents will daily provide a nutritious snack for their child. Contact the teacher if you have questions. The snack choices reinforce the work teachers do in emphasizing healthy food. Teachers will begin to teach proper hand washing techniques before snack time. Children also learn various mealtime prayers which are prayed prior to eating snacks. **Chewing gum is not allowed on the school campus.**

Every effort will be taken by the teaching staff to accommodate children with food allergies. It is important that parents inform their teacher of any food allergies and work as a team to protect their child.

HELPERS

Family helpers are a vital part of our program. Each family in the part-time preschool is encouraged to assist in his/her child's class an average of once a month. Helpers are asked not to bring extra children. Please make prior arrangements for these children. The helper is an extra pair of hands and eyes. The teacher will give the helper any specific directions needed. Interact with the children as you feel comfortable. Put yourself at the physical level of the children. Speak in a calm, confident, positive manner. (Say, "This is a walking place," rather than "Don't run!" and "Please use your words to let him/her know you want the red crayon," rather than "Don't grab the crayon!") This monthly experience gives families an opportunity to be a part of their child's preschool experience.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trip details will be included on the monthly calendar and an authorization for each trip will be sent home with the children. Parent volunteers may be asked to drive. It is each parent's responsibility to see that his/her child has the appropriate, and legally necessary, child safety seat installed in the vehicle in which his/her child will ride. Montana state law requires children under age six or weighing less than 60 pounds to ride in a federally approved car seat or booster seat that is properly installed and used. The law in Montana further requires that all other people in the vehicle must be wearing a seat belt if they are not required to be in a car seat. The driver of the vehicle assumes the primary liability.

Parents' jobs and interests are a good resource for field trips. Please let the teacher know if you have ideas. Each family should plan on helping with at least one field trip per year. If you are the driver for a field trip, please refrain from using a cell phone when the children are in your vehicle.

A student must be in school by 8:15 the day of the field trip in order to participate with their classmates in the scheduled field trip for that day. Students late or tardy may miss the opportunity of participating in the field trip.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES (revised 9/4/23)

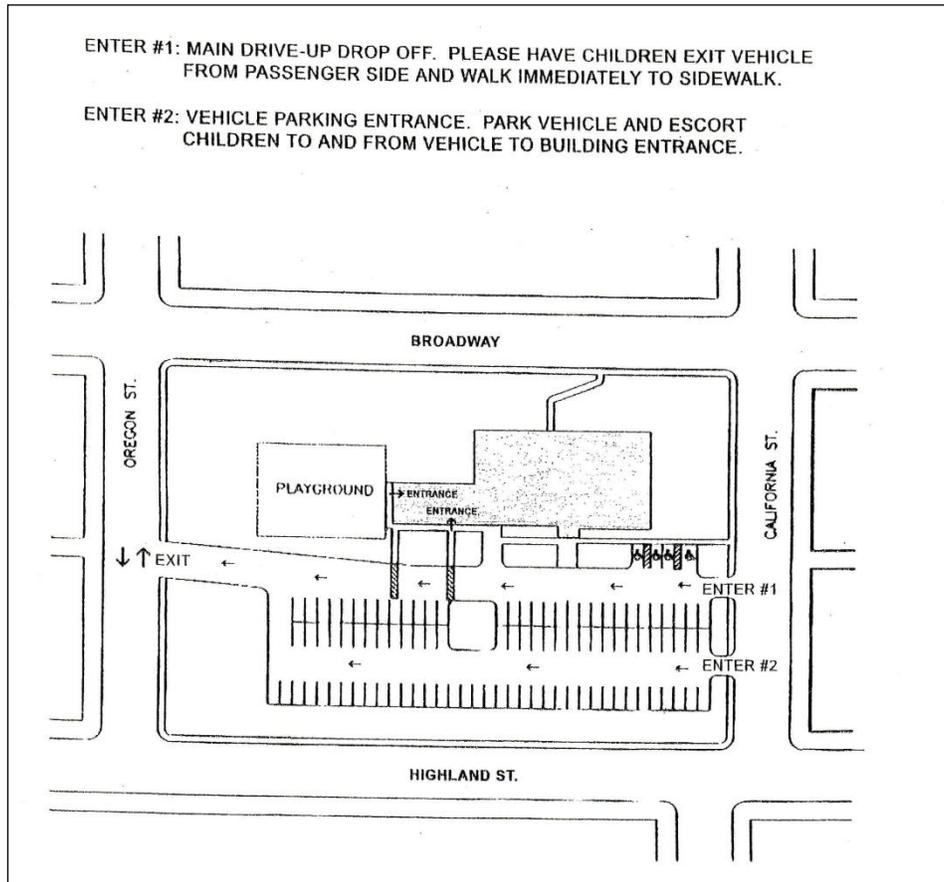
Children (in PreK) will receive progress reports at the mid-term and at the conclusion of the school year. In January, the teachers will complete the mid-term progress report for your child and may schedule a conference with you at the school. The conferences will occur by the last week in February. In the spring, the teacher will, as needed, contact you by phone conference to discuss your child's placement for the next school term.

Teachers are also available at other times to meet with you. If you would like to visit with your child's teacher at any other time, please make arrangements with them at a convenient time for each party. Calling ahead will ensure that the staff person you wish to visit with is not already committed to another appointment.

PARENT/ROOM VISITS

Parents are welcome to observe in their child's classroom; however, please communicate with your classroom teacher to set up a time for your visit. This will allow the visit to be scheduled for a day and time that will not conflict with other activities.

TRAFFIC FLOW



APPENDICES

Appendix A – Non-Discrimination Policy

Appendix B – Fees and Tuition Collection Policy

Appendix C – Student Security and Safety

Appendix D – Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse

Appendix E- Children’s Health and School

Appendix F – Emergency Procedures

APPENDIX A – NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

First Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, or nationality and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

First Lutheran does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or nationality or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, tuition assistance programs, and other school administered programs.

APPENDIX B – FEES AND TUITION COLLECTION POLICY

Tuition and fees are determined by the school advisory committee with the approval of the First Lutheran Church. Our school is dependent upon fees and tuition to provide the best educational experiences for the children and families. Prompt payments are necessary to ensure the quality functioning of the school, not the least of which includes teachers' salaries. A Parent Contract is signed to demonstrate agreement with this policy.

1. Upon admission, a non-refundable registration fee must be paid to reserve the space for your child and purchase materials. There is a new fee every year, and there is no reduction of this fee.
2. Tuition is due the 1st of each month for nine months, September – May. A \$25.00 fee will be assessed for returned checks. A one-month withdrawal notice from school will be required.
3. If no arrangements are made and the account becomes delinquent, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed.
4. If an account becomes more than seven (7) days delinquent, the family will be contacted by the director, or her designee, to make payment arrangements. Families will be expected to reply to this request promptly and agree in writing about any payment arrangements.
5. If the amount is not fully paid by the first school day of the following month or arrangements made that are acceptable to First Lutheran School, enrollment of that student will not be continued on the second school day of that month. Families will be notified with the last day the student will be allowed in class.
6. School records for the student will not be released until all charges are paid in full.
7. Parents shall provide the Director written notice of the parent's intent to withdraw their child from enrollment in the school. This written notice must be provided 30 days prior to the student's leaving. The parent's financial obligation for the current month will discontinue 30 days after receipt of the written notification.

APPENDIX C – STUDENT SECURITY AND SAFETY

School Families:

1. Outside doors for classroom access will be open 15 minutes before the class is scheduled to begin.
2. Outside doors will be locked 15 minutes after the class is scheduled to begin.
3. The church office door will remain locked during business and school hours. Persons requiring access to classrooms will need to ring the doorbell in order to be admitted by a staff member.
4. If you access the building through the church office door, please identify yourself to office personnel and state the nature of your business (e.g. picking up a child early).
5. No student will be released to the custody of any person who is not recognized as the child's legal guardian or a person designated by the legal guardian to pick up the child.
6. No teacher will confirm the presence of any child in the school to any unidentified and/or undesignated person who might inquire as to that child's presence in the school. All such inquiries will be referred to the office.

*** IMPORTANT NOTE – The outside doors do not have to be unlocked in order to exit the building. After the times the outside doors should be locked, all people exiting the building are requested to exit the building through the office door unless attending a special event.

Visitors:

1. All visitors to the building must access the building through the church office door.
2. There is a bell on the church office door to alert office personnel that you wish to gain access to the building. Office personnel can then inquire, as necessary, as to the nature of that person's visit.
3. If church or school staff observes anyone in the building that is not recognized, staff members will ask that person to identify themselves and assure that the person has checked-in at the school office.

APPENDIX D – REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE AT FIRST LUTHERAN SCHOOL

Introduction: Recognizing God’s tender love and concern for children, we believe it is our responsibility to do all that is reasonably possible to protect the children of this school from being abused while they are under our care. It is therefore our responsibility to inform those who work with our children concerning guidelines for maintaining a safe environment for all.

As Christians we know that sin permeates the world in which we live. “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (2 Peter 5:8) Unfortunately, as a result of sin, there have been situations in congregations where there has been abuse of children. We owe it to the children and families of our school to provide an environment safe from such behaviors.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is an effort to avoid problems of abuse from occurring at First Lutheran School. We are attempting to accomplish the following:

- To protect the children in our school from such inappropriate behaviors occurring.
- To protect our employees, both paid and volunteer, to avoid such misconduct from occurring and/or from being falsely accused of such behaviors.
- To help the school from becoming involved in lawsuits regarding such misconduct.
- To protect and help us to guard the honor and reputation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Inevitably, if such abuses occur, they will bring dishonor on the head of the church, Christ Himself.

Definitions of Child Abuse - Summary of State of Montana Laws:

- **Physical Abuse:** *Physical abuse* means an intentional or omission or gross negligence resulting in substantial skin bruising, internal bleeding, substantial injury to skin, subdural hematoma, burns, bone fractures, extreme pain, permanent or temporary disfigurement, impairment of any bodily organ or function, or death. Generally, physical abuse is any non-accidental injury. This includes hitting, kicking, slapping, shaking, burning, pinching, hair pulling, biting, choking, throwing, shoving, whipping, paddling, and the like.
- **Sexual Abuse:** *Sexual abuse* means the commission of sexual assault, sexual intercourse without consent, indecent exposure, deviate sexual conduct, ritual abuse, or incest. Sexual misconduct or sexual molestation is any activity which is sexual in nature whether permitted or not permitted, including but not limited to, sexual assault, sexual batter, sexual handling, sexual massage, sexual exploitation, sexual exhibition, photographic, video or other reproduction of sexual activity, sexual stimulation, fondling, intimacy, exposure of sexual organs, lewd or lascivious behavior or indecent exposure, fornication, undue familiarity, or unauthorized touching.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Psychological abuse or neglect means severe maltreatment through acts or omissions that are injurious to the child’s emotional, intellectual, or psychological capacity to function, including acts of violence against another person residing in the child’s home. Emotional abuse might include verbal abuse, belittling, and violence to others in the child’s presence.

- **Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse:**
 - Physicians, residents, interns, members of hospital staffs, nurses, osteopaths, chiropractors, podiatrists, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, optometrists, or any other health professionals
 - School teachers, other school officials, employees who work during regular school hours, operators or employees of any registered or licensed day-care or substitute care facility, or any other operators or employees of child care facilities
 - Mental health professionals or social workers
 - Christian Science practitioners or religious healers
 - Foster care, residential, or institutional workers
 - Members of clergy
 - Guardians *ad litem* or court appointed advocates authorized to investigate a report
 - Peace officers or other law enforcement officials

Reporting: Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child. Anyone aware of or suspecting abuse is to report such conduct to their supervisor. All cases shall be reported to the Pastor, who will, in turn, confidentially report each case to the President of the Montana District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and to the Department of Family Services of the State of Montana.

Preventative Measures at First Lutheran School:

- **Screening of Paid Employees:** Paid employees of First Lutheran School, including substitutes, are required to have a background check. Before 2009, these have included a criminal background check through the Montana Department of Justice, and a background check through the Montana Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Program. Starting in 2009, background checks are conducted through an online service called Protect My Ministry that is approved by the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. This includes a social security number trace, a national criminal record trace, and a national sex offender trace. A person must pass the background check before a job offer is made.
- **Screening of Volunteers:** Volunteers who are present in the school on a regular basis will be required to have a background check conducted by Protect My Ministry, prior to starting. Volunteers who serve only a few hours in the classroom each year are expected to complete a volunteer screening form. A sample is on the next page. However, the teacher will provide you with the screening form.

First Lutheran School Volunteer Screening Form

The disturbing and dramatic rise of abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. The following policies reflect our commitment to provide protective care of all children in our school.

- Adults who have been convicted of either child sexual abuse or child physical abuse will not be allowed to volunteer service in our school.
- Adult volunteers should immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to the teacher and/ or director.

Please complete the following and return this form to the school:

1. As a volunteer, do you agree to observe all church and school policies regarding working with our children?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. Have you ever been charged, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime involving child abuse of any type?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain:

3. In the past decade, have you ever been charged, convicted of, or pled guilty to any crime, other than minor traffic offenses? (This is including but not limited to drug-related charges, and other crimes of violence, or theft.)

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain:

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Print Name

Thank you for helping us at First Lutheran School in keeping all children safe!

APPENDIX E – CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SCHOOL

Sources: Lewis & Clark County Health Department, Helena School District #1, Wisconsin Code, headlice.org, keepkidshealthy.com, kidshealth.org, medicinenet.com

SCHOOL & ATTENDANCE

It is often frustrating how often children are sick. It is normal for young children to have six to eight upper respiratory tract infections and two or three gastrointestinal infections each year.

Although children with contagious illnesses do need to be excluded from school, most children with mild illnesses can still attend. Excluding children with mild illnesses when it isn't necessary, or requiring a visit to the child's pediatrician, can result in parents missing work and children being treated with antibiotics unnecessarily.

Call the school in regard to your child's absence, tardiness, or any concerns you may have. If the director is not in, you can leave a message on the school phone. Your child's teacher will get back with you as soon as possible.

It is sometimes hard to know when you should keep your children home from school. Reasons for keeping your child home from school (and usually taking your child to see your pediatrician) if he isn't able to participate in regular activities or having any of the following symptoms:

- fever (Keep in mind that if a child with a fever is given Tylenol before school the fever may come down temporarily only to return during the school day. It may be best to keep a child home for a day if you suspect this might happen.)
- lethargy or a very decreased activity
- irritability or persistent crying
- trouble breathing
- rash, if it is associated with a fever
- diarrhea that has blood or mucus in it
- vomiting more than two times in a twenty four hour period
- mouth sores (i.e. hand foot and mouth disease) in younger children that are still drooling a lot.
- eye infections (conjunctivitis or pink eye)

With many bacterial infections, it is safe to go back to school after appropriate treatments, including:

- twenty four hours of antibiotic therapy for strep throat and impetigo
- a single treatment for scabies and head lice
- five days of antibiotics for pertussis infections

Viral infections, which usually do not have any treatments, are usually contagious until after a certain period of time, including:

- chickenpox is contagious until all of the lesions have dried and are crusted over (usually six or seven days after the infection began).
- COVID-19 is a quickly developing virus infection that is highly contagious.
- Hepatitis A is contagious until at least a week after the infection and jaundice began.

To help prevent infections, you should teach your children to practice frequent handwashing, especially after using the bathroom and before eating, and avoid touching their face.

HEAD LICE

One of the most annoying occurrences can be head lice. They are tiny, wingless, parasitic insects that live among human hairs and feed on small amounts of blood drawn from the scalp. Lice are a very common problem, aren't dangerous, don't spread disease, but can be downright annoying.

Having head lice is not a sign of uncleanliness and can be a problem for anyone. Symptoms may include:

- scalp itching
- sensation of something moving in the hair
- red sores on the scalp caused by scratching
- swollen lymph nodes in the front and back of the neck

To check your child's hair for lice, part it in small sections and check on the scalp, behind the ears, and around the nape of the neck. Lice eggs, or nits, may look like dandruff but can't be removed by brushing or shaking them off. Lice lay nits on hair shafts close to the skin's surface. It's more common to see nits in a child's hair than to see live lice crawling on the scalp.

For treatment of lice, your child's doctor can recommend a medicated shampoo, cream, or lotion to kill the lice. These may be over-the-counter or prescription medication. Other steps to follow:

- use a fine tooth comb on your child's hair
- wet the hair beforehand to immobilize the lice and make them easier to comb out
- wash all bed linens and clothing that has been recently worn
- vacuum carpets and upholstered furniture
- examine members of your household who have had close contact with a person who has lice every 3 or 4 days
- treat anyone in household found to have lice or nits

If you discover that your child has lice and in order to handle the situation as discreetly as possible, here are guidelines:

- notify the school director about the lice and the treatment you've followed - this notification is anonymous and confidential
- treat your child before the child returns to the classroom
- treat your household accordingly – see information above

If the school director receives a report about lice, the school will follow these guidelines:

- director notifies all teachers that there is a case of lice in the school
- director verifies that treatment has been followed

- anonymous note sent home with all students that there is an identified case of lice at school so that all parents can screen their children
- teachers notify any individual parents if the teacher notices excessive scratching or complaints from a child concerning itching of the scalp
- each case treated individually and discreetly
- school floors, rugs, etc. thoroughly vacuumed
- shared clothing (i.e. dramatic play clothing) and other cloth items washed

PINK EYE

Another common issue in school children is pink eye, or conjunctivitis. It is an inflammation of the thin, transparent membrane covering the inner eyelid and the white part of the eye. Symptoms of pink eye may include:

- redness of the eyes
- eye pain
- blurred vision
- sensitivity to light
- burning or itching of the eye
- a scratchy feeling in the eye
- a discharge that may be watery or may contain pus

Anyone who develops a case of pink eye should see a doctor to see if antibiotic treatment is necessary. Bacterial pink eye generally results in a large amount of discharge that is green to yellow in color.

If you suspect that your child has pink eye, here are some guidelines:

- contact your child's doctor to discuss prescribed treatment
- notify the school director about the pink eye and the treatment you've followed - this notification is anonymous and confidential
- wash hands frequently to prevent the spread of infection
- application of warm washcloths will remove discharge
- after 24 hours of prescribed treatment, it's safe for your child to attend school

If a case of pink eye is reported to the director, all teachers will be notified that there is a case in the school. Teachers will notify any individual parents if the teacher notices unusual eye redness or discharge. Each case will be handled individually.

APPENDIX F – EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Classroom Notebooks for Emergency Contact Information

The notebooks containing emergency contact information for the children will be kept in a file by the exit door of each classroom. Teachers will take these notebooks with them during an evacuation. The director's office has the key to Covenant United Methodist Church, our emergency evacuation site. Staff will stay with their students until they can be released to an authorized adult or they receive other instructions from the administration.

Fire

Regular fire drills are held throughout the year. In case of an actual fire, children will be walked to Covenant United Methodist Church on Broadway by their teachers. Children will remain there until it is safe to return to the school or until they are picked up by their families or authorized person.

Earthquake

Regular earthquake drill are held throughout the year. In case of an earthquake, as soon as possible the children will be evacuated outside the building and gather on the south side of the parking lot. Teachers will stay with the children until it is determined to be safe for them to return to the building or determined that it is safe to walk the children to Covenant United Methodist Church on Broadway. Children will remain with staff until they are picked up by their families or authorized person.

Hazardous Materials – Leaks, Odors

Teachers will evacuate children from the building and gather on the south side of the parking lot. In inclement weather, the bus is available to use. Teachers will stay with the children until it is determined to be safe for them to return to the building or determined that it is safe to walk the children to Covenant United Methodist Church on Broadway. Children will remain with staff until they are picked up by their families or authorized person.

Loss of Power or Heat in Building

Children will stay in the building unless the loss of services results in a hazardous environment. If the environment is determined to be hazardous by the administration, the teachers will walk the children to Covenant United Methodist Church on Broadway. If the situation is not hazardous, the children will remain with their teachers until the end of their school session. Administration may choose to call families to pick up their children.

Government Alerts and Instructions

Upon being informed, administration will give directions to teachers. School will comply with instructions, keeping foremost in mind the safety and well-being of the children.