



Operational Policies

The four pillars that stand as the foundation of our philosophy – development, compassion, integrity, and faith – provide the ideal framework for early childhood education and the care of your child. We encourage learning activities that are creative, fun, and interest-oriented. We utilize Creative Curriculum within our schools to ensure academic success. Creative Curriculum is a research-based program that nurtures whole child development within all areas: social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive. The Creative Curriculum is a top-rated, research-based, whole-child curriculum designed to help educators at all levels of experience plan and implement a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program that meets the unique needs of children. Through hands-on, project-based investigations. The Creative Curriculum inspires children and builds their confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Each day, your child will sing songs, create art, investigate STEM projects, play math and literacy games, read books, and build friendships.

In addition, our Director of Spiritual Development has developed our own faith-based curriculum that is utilized within our classrooms to encourage children to develop a relationship with Jesus, come to understand the love He has for them, and build Christian character. Our school Chaplains minister daily throughout our schools through daily devotion and prayer each morning and weekly chapel.

We are a loving and joyful early learning center – a place where children find the space to grow, discover and explore in a safe, secure, happy environment. It is our hope that your children will feel warmth and acceptance in our school and enjoy their preschool experience.

Section 1: Hours of Operation

The Pillars will be open five days a week, Monday through Friday, year-round, 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. except for designated holidays. The Pillars will be closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Martin Luther King Day	Independence Day	Day after Thanksgiving
President's Day	Labor Day	Week of Christmas
Good Friday	Columbus Day	

No refund or credit will be given for holidays. We will normally observe these holidays on the day the government sets for observance. As a rule, if the holiday falls on Saturday, we will be closed on Friday. If the holiday falls on Sunday, we will be closed on Monday. Notices of closures will be posted in advance.

Children must be dropped off by 9:00am each day, to minimize disruption to the learning environment. Please notify us in advance if your child has a doctor's appointment and will be arriving late. **A doctor's note is required to drop your child off after 9:00am.** If a child is dropped off between 11:00 and 11:30, please be sure they have eaten lunch before arriving at the center. To prevent disturbance during nap time, children will not be accepted between 11:30 and 2:00, even with a doctor's note.

Tuition will not be pro-rated or refunded for children's absences. It is important that your child attends regularly as our curriculum builds from day to day, week to week. Consistency and structure are vital in your child's learning process.

Section 2: Release of Children

Upon arrival, please check your child in through the ProCare app, then bring your child in and leave him/her in the care of a team member within a classroom. Authorization from a parent/guardian is needed for those individuals who will be permitted to pick up your child. The names of these individuals should be provided to us at the time of enrollment. Under no circumstances will an adult be permitted to pick up a child without authorization or proper identification. In an emergency, you may call the center and give authorization over the phone, but we will request an email from a parent or guardian to verify and release children. All authorized individuals should be prepared to show photo identification at pick-up.

CHILDREN MAY NOT BE DROPPED OFF IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING OR COME IN BY THEMSELVES. When dropping your child off and picking them up, please keep them with you until they are left with their teacher or until they are safely outside the building with you. We ask that you please turn our car off, lock the doors and hide any valuables. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Your child's safety and the safety of others is very important to us.

We request that all parents enter the front doors of the building to pick up or drop off children. Playground release will not be permitted, as parents are encouraged to enter the front of the school, collect their child's belongings from their classroom and then gather children off the playground.

Section 3: Illness and Injury

- I. In the event that your child is ill and will be absent, **a courtesy call is appreciated.**
- II. In the event that your child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be contacted to come pick up the child. Absences will not be discounted or prorated.
- III. A child will not be admitted if one or more of the following exists:
 - a. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child activities, including outdoor play.
 - b. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
 - c. The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a healthcare professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care activities:
 - i. Tympanic (ear) or forehead temperature of 100 degrees or greater (Children should stay at home at least 24 hours after a normal temperature is achieved WITHOUT the help of fever-reducing medications. For example, if your child goes home on Monday with a fever, they may come back to the Center on Wednesday, if their temperature was normal on Tuesday);
 - ii. Two or more diarrhea within 24 hours (Children may return when normal function returns);
 - iii. Two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours (Children may return when they can retain a light meal);
 - iv. Persistent hacking or congested cough with sore throat (Children may return with doctor's written permission);
 - v. Green nasal discharge, which indicates a respiratory infection which requires treatment (Children may return with doctor's written permission);
 - vi. Conjunctivitis, or pink eye (Because it is highly contagious, children may return with doctor's written permission);
 - vii. Difficulty in breathing to the point where child is extremely uncomfortable or unable to sleep normally;
 - viii. Persistent pain in abdomen.
 - ix. Swelling, redness, or throbbing in an injured part of the body;
 - x. Undiagnosed profuse rash or blisters on parts of the body;
 - xi. Behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill;

- d. health care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, And the child does not have medical documentation indicating that they are no longer contagious.
- IV. If your child is allergic to any food and/or requires a special diet, please provide a doctor's or health-care professional's letter. We will request further information and ask you to partner with your physician to fill out a Food Allergy Emergency Plan, as required by DCYF.

Section 4: Medications and Special Accommodations

Prescription medication can be dispensed **IF** it is prescribed to be given **three times a day or more**. The following must be provided:

- A parent's signed authorization form that includes time to administer the medication, according to label direction.
- Medication is in its **original container** and is labeled with the child's full name with the date brought to the center.
- Medication and prescription are not expired.

Over-the-counter medication cannot be dispensed unless it is prescribed by a physician and accompanied by the physician's written prescription. Only the director or person in charge may administer the medication. Prescribed rescue medication will be kept on-site as needed.

Parents with children who require special care as recommended by a health-care professional; or a qualified professional affiliated with the local school district or early childhood intervention programs should inform The Pillars prior to enrollment in order for accommodations to be made when the following requests are required:

- Medications prescribed for continuous, long-term use;
- Limitations or restrictions on child's activities; and
- Special care the child requires, including:
 - Any reasonable accommodations or modifications;
 - Any adaptive equipment provided for the child, and instructions for its use; and
 - Symptoms or indications of potential complications related to a physical, cognitive, or mental condition that may warrant prevention or intervention while the child is in care.
 - Early intervention services or special education services that will take place during operating hours including accurate space for therapies.

The Pillars Christian Learning Center is committed to ensuring that caregivers adapt equipment and utilize various procedures and methods necessary to care for a child with special needs in a natural environment. We will do our best to collaborate with early intervention specialists, and partner with qualified service providers upon parent request and approval.

Section 5: Medical Emergencies

If your child is seriously injured, CPR and/or the appropriate First Aid will be administered until help arrives. 911 will be contacted immediately for assistance. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible. Information given in your enrollment packet will be used at this time. Please remember to keep your child's records updated.

Section 6: Parental Notifications

Parents will be notified in person, by phone, through the ProCare app, in writing, and/or using bulletin boards and parent notification boards:

- If the child is injured and the injury requires medical attention;
- If the child has signs or symptoms requiring exclusion from care; If the child has been involved in any situation that placed the child at risk; or a non-routine situation that may have placed, the child at risk or for injury or harm.

- If any situation renders the center unsafe;
- If a less serious injury or incident takes place, the parents will be notified at the time of pick up
- If there are any changes to any policies or procedures;
- If there is a change in the staff working with your child every day.
- If there is an outbreak of any communicable disease.

Section 7: Guidance and Discipline Practices

Redirection and verbal communication are used as a method of discipline. Your child will be treated with courtesy and respect. Continual communication with parents and guardians must be maintained concerning the child's behavior and ongoing documentation and progress reports are required. Staff will be sensitive to different cultural beliefs and values, and conversations will be framed around school readiness, our program objective, and parents will always be kept informed of their child's progress. Please read the Guidance and Disciplinary Guidelines attached for information regarding setting age-appropriate behavior expectations based on the child's current stage of development.

Section 8: Suspension and Expulsion

In rare cases, a child may be suspended or expelled due to unacceptable behavior that risks the child, other children in our care or the staff. The steps of the Guidance and Disciplinary Guidelines will be followed, and suspension or expulsion will only be used as a last resort. All steps of the Guidance and Disciplinary Guidelines are created in adherence to minimum licensing standards to support children's current stage of development.

Section 9: Safe Sleep

Safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants are utilized to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome in children under the age of one year. The staff members in our center follow these guidelines:

- Infants are always placed on their backs for sleeping unless the parent provides an Infant Sleep Exception form signed by a health care professional.
- Infants are placed on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size and non-full-size cribs.
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs are bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed include soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep position devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- Wedges and infant positioners may increase the risk of suffocation and therefore are prohibited.
- Sleeping areas are well-ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Sleep clothing, such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets, are encouraged as an alternative to blankets. Infant arms must be able to move freely while wearing any of the above.
- Only one infant will be placed in a crib to sleep.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep, but the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a strangulation risk.
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing or arrives to care asleep in a car seat) the infant will be moved to a crib immediately unless the parent provides an Infant Sleep Exception form signed by a healthcare professional.
- Our childcare program is smoke-free.
- Caregivers actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.
- If an infant can roll back and forth from front to back, they will be placed on their back to sleep and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Additionally, babies who are awake have supervised daily "tummy time" to help them strengthen muscles and develop normally.
- Infants will not be swaddled for sleep or rest unless the parent provides an Infant Sleep Exception form signed by a healthcare professional.

Section 10: Meals and Snacks

Each day, a nutritious breakfast is served from 7:00am – 8:00 am. A well-balanced meal is prepared daily at lunch for your children. An afternoon snack is also provided for all children. Healthy snacks are served to school-age children as they arrive each afternoon. All our meals are prepared at the center, and we participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which ensures that we meet nutritional requirements for all meals served. Prepared food brought into the program to be shared among children is commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen inspected by local health officials.

A rotating four-week menu is posted with all meals for the week. Children will be encouraged, but not forced, to eat. Food is never withheld as a means of discipline or used to reward good behavior. Any eating problems will be discussed with the parents. For the children's safety, liquids, and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach.

Additionally, food allergy lists are maintained for each classroom. ALL staff are educated on food allergies and take precautions to ensure that children are protected. Our center is **PEANUT-FREE** and all food items containing peanuts are prohibited.

Outside food brought in for special occasions such as birthdays or class parties must be purchased from a facility inspected by the health department and have an ingredient label.

Section 11: Home Lunch Practices

Outside food is permitted for medical issues, religious preferences, and food preferences. To ensure the safety of food brought from home:

- Food brought from home must be stored in a lunch box, dated daily, and have the child's name written on it.
- Food must be delivered to the kitchen by parents, or placed on the lunch carts that are located within the hallways. Lunches will be refrigerated and heated if needed to maintain appropriate temperatures.
- Families should provide a beverage and a lunch that follows the USDA requirements for nutrition. We encourage fresh fruits and vegetables, and request parents refrain from chips, cookies or snack items.
- Food may be offered by the preschool staff to supplement a lunch that does not meet these requirements. Choose MyPlate illustrates the five food groups using a colorful place setting. Go to www.choosemyplate.gov for practical information and tips to help build healthier diets.
- Milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables will be made available for any child bringing lunch from home. A copy of the current dated menu will be posted in each classroom as well as the front foyer for your viewing.

The Pillars has strategies in place to educate children and their parents on nutrition and we provide information to educate parents about foods that may cause allergic reactions. We provide sample menus of healthy lunches for parents whose children bring food from home. Parents are encouraged to provide meals with adequate nutritional value. For information on child nutrition, please visit www.fns.usda.gov.

Section 12: Immunization Requirements

Each child enrolled in/or admitted to child-care centers must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of Higher Education. This requirement applies to all children in care from birth to 17 years of age.

Except as otherwise provided in this division, all immunizations required for the child's age must be completed by the date of admission.

TB testing requirements vary from county to county. We do recommend, however, that for the safety of all staff and students, parents have their child tested for tuberculosis. At a later time, we may choose to require TB

testing for all children enrolled at the facility.

Section 13: Hearing and Vision Screening Requirements

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems for children who are enrolled in a child-care center that are first-time enrollees, who are four years of age or older and for all children enrolled in programs who are four years of age by September 1 of each year. These screenings must be completed within 120 calendar days from enrollment.

A present screening conducted within one year before enrollment is acceptable. The center must be provided with the individual vision or hearing screening or must provide the center with a signed statement from the parent that the screening records are on file at the school the child currently attends. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the other program or school.

Section 14: Enrollment Procedures

All enrollment forms must be filled out completely and returned to the office before any child is permitted to attend school. These forms include enrollment agreement, admission information, statement of health, immunization records, hearing and vision screening, Child and Adult Care Food Program forms, Ointment permission forms, and Discipline and Guidance Guidelines.

Parents will be provided with a copy of the Operational Policies at the time of enrollment. Parents must sign that they have read and understand all policies. If any policies or procedures are changed, the parents and guardians will be provided with written notice of this change and will be asked to sign another statement that they have read and understand the changes that have been made. Changes will also be posted on the parent information board.

Section 15: Transportation

During the school year, we provide drop-off and pick-up for school-aged children from nearby schools. Before school, breakfast is provided. Upon arrival at the center in the afternoon, a snack is provided.

Section 16: Water Activities

During the summer months, children will take part in water activities. Parents are required to inform center personnel if a child is able to swim without assistance on enrollment paperwork. Water activities will include sprinkler play and wading pool play. No child will use the sprinkler equipment on or near a hard, slippery surface. All wading pools will be sanitized daily. All children will be supervised during water play at all times. If you do not wish for your child to take part in water activities, please specify this on your admission information form.

Section 17: Field Trips

Field trips will be taken during the school year with children ages four to twelve. We will visit places like the zoo, library, museums, picnics in the park, and other places of interest. Field trip notices will be posted at least 48 hours in advance. All children must have a signed permission slip to board transportation. If children do not have proper parent authorization, they will not be allowed to attend off site field trips and will be relocated to a younger classroom as a helper until the class returns to the school.

From time to time our Pre-K students will attend offsite field trips to various locations, supporting overall curriculum themes. For students with parent permission to attend there will be an additional charge assessed to accounts for field trips to cover the cost of activity and transportation.

Family pets may not be brought into the center at any time. On occasion, an animal may be brought in as part of a learning activity. Parents will be notified in writing in advance and only children with a permission slip signed by a parent will be allowed contact with the animal. Any animals brought in must have current

vaccinations and must have been examined by a local veterinarian to obtain a statement of health. Documentation will accompany the animal.

Section 18: Insect Repellant and Sunscreen

Parents may provide insect repellant and sunscreen to be applied to their child before going outside each day. The products must be in their original container and may not be shared with siblings or other children and will be applied in accordance with label direction. An Ointments and Creams Authorization form must be completed and returned before these products may be applied. The products you provide will be labeled with your child's first and last name and will be used only on your child.

Section 19: Questions and Answers

Parents are encouraged to approach the administrative team with any questions or concerns. Parents are welcome to make an appointment with the Director to review and discuss facility policies and procedures. If the director is available, you can attempt to speak with him/hear any time you are in the facility. To schedule an appointment for a specific date and time, please reach out to your school via email or direct phone numbers which can be located on our website.

Section 20: Parental Participation

We encourage parental involvement. Parents are invited to attend holiday celebrations, including class parties and parades. If we are looking for volunteers for any special event, parents will receive a form to sign up to take part in that event. If a parent wishes to be involved in any other day-to-day activities, please see the Director to obtain a form for a background check.

Section 21: Minimum Standards

You have the right to review a copy of the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers and the most recent inspection report. Please contact the Director to review these documents. The Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers can also be accessed online at www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/Centers746.pdf.

Section 22: Contacting the Local Family and Protective Services Office

San Antonio Region

Local Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) office:
3635 S.E. Military Dr. P.O. Box 23990 MC 278-5, San Antonio, Texas 78223-0990 (210) 337-3399

DFW Region

Local Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) office:
208 YMCA Dr. Mail code: 3272, Waxahachie, Texas 75165 (972) 937-0892

DFPS Website: www.txchildcaresearch.org

Child Abuse Hotline: 1 (800) 252-5400

Poison Control: 1 (800) 222-1222

Section 23: Emergency Preparedness Plan

- I. Evacuation, Relocation, and Sheltering/Lock-down of Children
 - a. The first responsibility of staff in an emergency evacuation or relocation is to move the children to a designated safe area or alternate shelter known to all employees, caregivers, parents, and volunteers. Teachers will stay with their children and always keep class attendance rosters with them. Teachers are also responsible for bringing cell phones into the designated safe area or alternate shelter.
 - b. Children and caregivers will be evacuated by foot to the front of the building along the side

- fence line and will remain at the fence until they can return to their classrooms, in the case of fire or gas leak. In case of an emergency that requires evacuation of the center, the children will be relocated according to the Alternative Shelter list. If unable to return to the center, parents will be notified to pick up their children. Children under the age of 24 months, who have limited mobility, or who otherwise may need assistance in an emergency, will be placed in an emergency evacuation crib, stroller, or wagon.
- c. In a sheltering/lock-down emergency, administrative staff will call 911. A code word has been developed and staff will be alerted through the use of the code word. If the intruder is outside, teachers will keep children in their classroom. If the intruder is inside the building, teachers have been instructed to keep the children out of sight in designated areas of the building. An Intruder Drill has been set in place which we practice quarterly.
 - d. An Emergency Evacuation Plan is posted in each classroom and the lobby.
 - e. Please see attached Alternative Shelter list for specific location of emergency evacuation.
 - f. Children in attendance at the time of the emergency will be accounted for at the designated safe area or alternate shelter by a name-to-face check. Teachers will carry their iPad, which includes the classroom sign-in/out attendance sheets, when evacuating.

II. Communication

- a. Emergency Phone Number – In the event of an emergency evacuation, the center's phone number will be forwarded to the director's cell phone. Parents may call the regular center number for information.
- b. The director will communicate with local authorities, parents, and Childcare Licensing via her cell phone. Additionally, electronic messages will be sent to parents via Procure.
- c. When evacuating, staff will carry the classroom iPad that contain emergency phone numbers within each child's profile.

III. Essential Documentation - Procure

- a. When evacuating, staff will carry the classroom iPads which contain emergency phone numbers within each child's profile.
- b. Authorization for emergency care is also included in the ProCare app.
- c. The child tracking information will be carried by the teachers.
- d. The ProCare app can be accessed through iPad or cell phones and includes a list of children in care by classroom, sign in and sign out sheets, as well as contact information.

IV. Care for Children Until Release to Parent/Guardian

- a. Teachers will stay with their children.
- b. Staff will continue to care for children until each child has been released to their parent.
- c. Emergency bags are kept in each classroom and will be carried by the teachers when evacuating.
- d. Bags contain diapers (for age-appropriate classrooms), snacks, books, portable toys, and activities.

V. Reunification

- a. Children will be reunified with their parents as the evacuation, relocation, or sheltering/lock-down is lifted.
- b. If an evacuation has occurred, parents will pick up their children in the parking lot.
- c. If a relocation has occurred, parents will pick up their children at the Alternative Shelter location included within this enrollment packet.
- d. If a lock-down has been lifted, parents will pick up their children from their classroom.
- e. Parents will be required to show identification to the teacher responsible for their child.

Section 24: Accommodations for Breastfeeding Mothers

Mothers have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their infant while in care. Breast milk that is left at the center will be properly stored in a refrigerator. Breast milk containers must be labeled with the child's name as well as the date the breast milk was expressed. If mothers prefer to breastfeed an infant at the center, a comfortable chair will be provided for their use in the infant room. For parents in need of breastfeeding education and resources, they are available upon request. The WIC breastfeeding coordinator may be reached at 1-800-WIC-FOR-U.

Section 25: Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children

The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defines child abuse and neglect as, at minimum: any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

- Caregivers are required to complete annual training regarding preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children.
- Caregivers are mandated reporters and must report suspected abuse immediately to Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline. Individuals are not required to notify anyone prior to calling intake, as they have been trained on the signs of suspected abuse yearly and are required by law to report suspected abuse to authorities.
- Warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect include extremes in behavior, lack of attachment to a parent or caregiver, frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, fear of going home, ill-fitting or filthy clothing, consistently bad hygiene, trouble walking or sitting, display of knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age. For a complete list of warning signs, visit Helpguide.org.
- Several statewide services and support programs are available, including the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (www.dfps.state.tx.us); Prevent Child Abuse Texas (www.preventchildabusetexas.org); Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (www.cactx.org); and Court Appointed Special Advocates of Texas (www.texascasa.org).
- Local community resources include the Family Service Association of San Antonio (family.service.org), Child Advocates of San Antonio (CASA), and Child Safe (childsafesa.org). The West Dallas Multipurpose Center, (214) 670-7230 for more information.
- Parents of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should contact SAPD Children's Services at (210) 207-2180 or Child Protective Services Child Abuse Hotline at 1 (800) 252-5400.
- Team members who report suspicion of child abuse/neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason, unless it is proven that the report was intended to do harm.

Section 26: Procedures for Conducting Health Checks

- Health Check is a visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury, in response to changes in the child's behavior since the last date of attendance.
- Caregivers will visually assess the child upon arrival. Only areas of the body not covered by clothing will be assessed, unless there is cause for concern about the child's health.
- Due to state compliance, we require all children, including infants to be awake for our team members to conduct assessments of the children coming into the program.
- If no signs or symptoms of illness or injury are present, the assessment will not be documented.
- If signs or symptoms of illness or injury are present, the assessment will be documented on the Health Check Form.
- If signs of illness or injury are present, shirt-sleeves may be pushed up to the elbow, shirts may be lifted to expose the child's back, and pant legs may be lifted to the knee for further assessment.
- If signs or symptoms of illness or injury are discovered during diaper changing, they will be documented on the Health Check Form.

Section 27: Vaccine-Preventable Disease Policy

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that adults receive the following immunizations:

Influenza (Flu), HepA (Hepatitis), and Pertussis (Whooping Cough). Employees are strongly encouraged to obtain these immunizations but are not required to do so.

To protect the children in our care from exposure to disease, caregivers are required to use gloves when changing diapers, administering first aid, and serving food. Caregivers who are showing signs of illness are not allowed to care for children.

Section 28: Visitation and Observation

Our learning center has an “open door policy”. Parents are welcome to visit and observe our group at any time. Observers are expected to respect the children and their schedule by not interrupting their activities and lessons and refrain from taking pictures or videos of any children other than their own. If it is seen that the presence of any guest is causing a disruption to the class, you may be asked to leave. Please see Parent Orientation Information for time restraints regarding visits.

Section 29: Gang-Free Zone

Our center is designated a gang-free zone. Certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of this center is a violation of law and is therefore subject to increased penalties under state law.

Section 30: Audio and Video Monitoring

Audio and video monitoring are used at the center for quality assurance, training, and security purposes. To protect the security and privacy of the students and adults at the center, we have adopted the following policies governing the use of audio and video monitoring:

- We reserve the right, but are not required, to conduct audio and video monitoring and recording throughout all interior classrooms (excluding bathroom areas) and exterior areas of the center.
- We reserve the right, but are not required, to retain any audio / video recordings for any period of time, unless specifically directed by a law enforcement agency.
- We do not guarantee that all interior and exterior areas of the center will be covered by audio or video monitoring (typically due to system limitations or other technical issues).

Access to Live Monitoring – Parents and other authorized individuals can view the live video monitor of their child’s room and related areas **on the monitor in the lobby**. Watching the live monitor is permitted as it is similar to watching the actual class through the classroom window and is consistent with our Open-Door policy. Recording the images displayed on the monitors (ex. using a smartphone) is strictly prohibited.

Access to Recordings – All recordings are the property of The Pillars Christian Learning Center and we have the right to restrict access to any recording of any time from anyone.

- Access to the recordings is limited to the Center Director for quality assurance, training, and security purposes. The Center Director and Assistant Director can share with staff members as appropriate. No other center staff members are permitted to review recordings. Requests to view footage will be denied in accordance with this policy.
- Non-staff members are prohibited from viewing the recordings. Since recordings will almost certainly contain more than one person, we need to preserve their rights.
- We will fully cooperate with authorities investigating suspected child abuse or neglect.

Section 31: Right to Refuse Care

We reserve the right to refuse care for a child who is unable to adjust, sick, or improperly dressed, or for parents who do not keep to our policy agreements or for outstanding debt.

Section 32: Parent Code of Conduct

Online Communication Policy

As part of our commitment to maintaining a respectful and professional environment, we kindly request that parents refrain from posting any information or content related to The Pillars Christian Learning Center, including our premises, staff, children, and their families on any online platforms. This policy aims to protect the privacy and well-being of everyone involved in our childcare program.

Conflict Resolution Policy

The Pillars' procedures for addressing and resolving difficulties and differences between families and team members follow the biblical principles found in Matthew 18's approach to respectful and direct communication.

The conflict resolution process includes:

1. The initial step involves a direct, informal discussion between the teacher and the parent to address and resolve the issue.
2. If the issue remains unresolved after a reasonable amount of time, a formal resolution process will involve a meeting between the parent and the Center Director.

These procedures ensure that concerns are addressed appropriately, with increasing levels of formality as needed.

Parents who disregard these policies may face the following consequences

- **Immediate Termination:** The Pillars CLC reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any child whose parent or guardian engages in posting negative or untruthful statements online.
- **Tuition Obligation:** In the event of termination due to such behavior, the parent or guardian will be responsible for paying the remaining two weeks of tuition fees.
- **Legal Action:** Depending on the nature and severity of the posted content, The Pillars CLC may pursue legal action, including filing a lawsuit, to protect its reputation and address any damages caused. In such cases, the parent or guardian will be responsible for covering all associated legal expenses.

By adhering to our Online Communication Policy, we foster a respectful and professional environment where open dialogue and direct communication are valued. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in maintaining the privacy and well-being of The Pillars Christian Learning Center community.

Parent Orientation Information

The Pillars Christian Learning Center strives to provide exceptional communication and clear expectations for both team members and families on how our schools operate day to day. Below you will find a variety of topics designed to inform parents of policies and procedures that should be reviewed prior to the start of care.

I. Curriculum Goals

The Pillars uses The Creative Curriculum, a research-based program designed for children from infancy through preschool. This curriculum nurtures the whole child, focusing on social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. The program's goal is to prepare children for kindergarten and promote self-sufficiency. Children will engage daily in activities such as singing, creative art, exploring STEM projects, playing math and literacy games, reading books, and building friendships. The Pillars uses Teaching Strategies GOLD to assess children's development from infants through Pre-K Four. Assessments are conducted three times per year—beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The insights gathered from Teaching Strategies GOLD guide our instructional strategies, ensuring each child receives individualized support tailored to their unique needs. Parents are informed of their child's progress during beginning and end-of-year conferences. If any developmental concerns arise, The Pillars will communicate promptly and provide resources to support the child at home.

II. Personal Items Guidelines

Children should come to the center each day dressed in weather-appropriate clothing that they can move in freely. All shoes should be close-toed – no sandals or flip-flops. Every child that is walking or learning to walk must wear shoes. Please bring extra clothing in case of restroom accidents or spills. Clothing that is brought or worn to The Pillars should be labeled to avoid confusion or inadvertently being misplaced/lost. The Pillars CLC does not assume responsibility for lost or misplaced items, nor will we replace or provide credit for items lost or misplaced. Children should not bring personal toys to school, other than on scheduled show-and-tell days. This can add more stress for other children who may want to play with a new item, as they may confuse this with toys they have at their own house, or they may accidentally take it home. The Pillars CLC does not assume responsibility for lost or misplaced items, nor will we replace or provide credit for items lost or misplaced.

III. Inclement Weather Policy

Our center follows local school district guidance when it comes to school delays or closings. If local school districts within your city are closed due to inclement weather, the center will be as well. Please watch the local news for updates. The Pillars CLC does not credit or prorate for winter weather closures.

IV. Parent Marital Separation Procedures

If parents become legally separated while they have a child enrolled with us, please provide the director with copies of the court documents. We will not make changes to enrollment forms, including permission to pick up, without court documents. In the event changes are necessary, families will be provided with new enrollment paperwork so updates can be made.

V. Physical Activities

Children spend time outside each day, weather permitting. Morning and afternoon playground time is part of the daily schedule and is encouraged every day. Please dress children appropriately for weather conditions. We encourage children to wear closed-toe shoes while at school in order to prevent injury. In accordance with state licensing regulations, the following physical activity times will be provided for each age group:

- a. Infants will be given the opportunity for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.
- b. Toddlers-60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.
- c. Preschool-PreK-90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.
- d. School age-children in attendance for a full day will have a min of 90 minutes of vigorous active play.
- e. Afterschool school-age children will participate in a min of 30 minutes of active play each day.

VI. Screen Time Policy

Screen time is limited to one movie day per week, not to exceed two hours. Children under 2 are not permitted to have screen time while in care.

VII. Contact Information Update

The Pillars utilizes the following criteria when determining if extreme weather conditions pose a significant health risk that prohibits or limits outdoor play.

Warmer climate conditions: Directors will utilize the Child Care Weather Watch index along with National Weather Center warnings and advisories. Children are prohibited from playing outside when the temperature is over **100F**. Using caution when temperatures are above 90 degrees.

Colder climate conditions: Directors will utilize the Child Care Weather Watch index along with

National Weather Center warning and advisories. Children are prohibited from playing outside when the temperature is below 9 degrees. Using caution when temperatures are under 30 degrees.

For the safety of your child, please ensure that we have current contact information for parents/guardians and emergency contacts. Information may be updated by requesting your child's file and updating enrollment forms, emailing updated information, or calling the center. If staff is not available, forms and envelopes are available at the front desk and may be left on the counter.

VIII. Communication with Parents

Communication between staff and parents is essential for the well-being of the children in our care. Teachers will communicate directly with parents through ProCare. A monthly newsletter and calendar is emailed to parents at the beginning of each month, listing the month's activities, including holiday celebrations. Other important information is emailed or sent home with the child.

IX. Extended Classroom Visit

Upon enrollment, a parent and child have the opportunity to visit the classroom for 30 minutes, allowing the child to get comfortable in the center. Please coordinate with the director.

X. Texas Rising Star Quality Certification (TRS)

Our centers strive to obtain accreditation through the Texas Rising Star Quality Certification. TRS is a quality rating and improvement system for Texas early childhood programs. Obtaining this certification demonstrates that our program goes above and beyond the Minimum Standards required by Licensing and indicates that we are a high-quality program.

XI. CCS Enrollment

For families participating in the Child Care Subsidies (CCS) program, we encourage you to inform us of any elements of your CCS enrollment for which we may provide assistance.

XII. Family Support Resources

Many family support resources are available in our area. The YMCA, Child Find (a service for children with different learning needs), and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) provide assistance with child-related issues. Please ask the director for information about these and other local resources. For job-loss, please call 211 for assistance.

XIII. Family Participation

It is essential that staff and parents' partner together to focus on the well-being of the children. The following are opportunities for family participation.

- a. Consistent Arrival Times – Children thrive on routine, and we encourage you to drop off and pick up your child at the same time each day. Having a consistent routine helps prepare children for the transition to kindergarten. As a reminder, children must be dropped off by 9:00 a.m. each day. This ensures that each child is present and ready to begin the daily curriculum and prevents disruption to the learning environment.
- b. Role and Influence of Families – Because families play such a great role in a child's development, we encourage parents to be involved in our program. Opportunities for parent involvement include field trips, classroom parties and holiday celebrations, parades, and other special activities.
- c. Annual Surveys – Parent surveys are sent to parents bi-annually. We ask that you

- take a moment to provide valuable feedback about our program.
- d. Parent/Teacher Conferences – Conferences are held bi-annually. Parent/teacher conferences allow teachers to share information about each child’s development, as well as provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions.
 - e. No Cell Phone Zone – Our center is a “No Cell Phone Zone” for parents. To allow staff to communicate with parents, we ask that you do not use your cell phone in the center, particularly when dropping off or picking up your child.

XIV. Separation Policy

A written two-week notice is required for withdrawal from enrollment. A Withdrawal Form must be completed and turned into the administration team. Tuition is due during this two-week notice period. In the event of withdrawal, a student may not be enrolled again for four weeks following withdrawal unless the tuition for the time withdrawn is paid at re-enrollment along with a new registration fee. In the event of withdrawal, The Pillars CLC will maintain any personal belongings left behind for 14 business days and will contact the family to pick up personal effects left behind. If items are left longer, they will be donated to charity as there is limited space.

XV. Future Student List Expectations

We are delighted to have many siblings throughout our schools, fostering that home away from home feeling. We give enrollment preference to siblings, but we cannot guarantee a space automatically. To maintain enrollment guidelines, we require parents to give us at least six months’ notice if they intend to enroll a new sibling to our program. Please stop by the front desk of your school and inquire about the Future Student List registration process. When possible, we will make every effort to make a space available for your baby/child.

XVI. Nap Mat and Sleep Equipment

Per licensing guidelines, all children are required to sleep on an age-appropriate nap or rest equipment during naptime. As such The Pillars requests families purchase a nap mat from the school, with fees to be assessed during the first billing cycle of enrollment. Families may opt to purchase nap mats from a third-party vendor and bring this to the school with their child’s name written on them.

XVII. Student Records

The content of each child's health and safety file at The Pillars is considered confidential. However, access to these records is immediately available upon request to:

- Administrators and educators who have received consent from a parent or legal guardian
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities

XVIII. Idling Vehicles Policy

Idling vehicles contribute to air pollution and emit air toxins, which are pollutants known or suspected to cause serious health effects. Limiting a vehicle’s idling time can dramatically reduce these pollutants and children’s exposure to them. To reduce the children’s exposure to air toxins emitted from idling vehicles we discourage unnecessary idling not only at our school but anywhere you are waiting for more than 10 seconds. This simple change will improve the air our children breathe, as well as the air quality in our neighborhoods. If idling is necessary for temperature control, please restrict it to no more than 5 minutes.

When transporting children to and from our center turn off the engine as soon as possible after arriving at school loading or unloading areas. Only restart the bus when you are ready to depart.

XIX. Policy Updates

Please note The Pillars CLC reserves the right to update or revise policies annually or as needed.

I acknowledge that I have read The Pillars Christian Learning Centers Operational Policies and agree to the terms and conditions outlined above.

Child's Name:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: