



Saint Mark Lutheran School
K Ā N E ' O H E , H A W A I ' I

Parent/Student Handbook

Early Learning Program

2024 – 2025

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MISSION

Saint Mark Lutheran School extends the love and care of Jesus Christ to all people, while nurturing families and preparing students to integrate faith and life, through quality Christ-centered education.

PHILOSOPHY & PURPOSE

Saint Mark Lutheran School exists as an extension of the ministry of Saint Mark Lutheran Church of Kaneohe, Hawaii. The central purpose of the church and school is to share the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The specific emphasis of Saint Mark Lutheran School is to facilitate the development of the 'whole child' in relation to his/her spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and aesthetic needs.

Christianity is the heart of the Lutheran school curriculum. Its influence permeates and gives substance to all subject areas taught. Only in keeping with the revealed Truth, God's Word, can all secular subjects be properly understood and rightly applied.

Teachers and curriculum material will not teach any topics which are contrary to biblical teachings. While opposing topics may be discussed, they will not be taught as true and feasible if they are contrary to Scriptures. History is truly appreciated only when it is presented as the record of God's guidance of the affairs of mankind in the building of His eternal Kingdom. The sciences are correctly understood only when they are taught as the unfolding of God's wonderful creation and preservation. All subjects achieve their highest meaning and purpose only when they are taught from a Christian, biblical perspective.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students graduating from Saint Mark Lutheran School should be able to:

Spiritually

- Profess Jesus who saves them by grace through faith alone
- Use the Bible as their primary guide for life
- Utilize their talents to glorify God and serve others
- Lead Christian lives through worship and prayer
- Understand Bible teachings in Luther's Small Catechism

Intellectually

- Think critically and logically to make informed decisions
- Read and comprehend at grade level
- Express themselves clearly and concisely through the written and spoken language
- Use computational skills, deductive reasoning and a strong sense of number to solve problems
- Understand basic geometric relationships and properly use measuring instruments/calculators
- Know the geography, history, culture, and current events of Hawaii, the U.S., and the world
- Apply knowledge of the scientific method
- Have a basic knowledge of art and music
- Use a computer proficiently
- Be an active listener

Physically

- Know and apply the importance of nutrition, fitness, and exercise to their lives
- Know the basic rules of various sports and games and practice good sportsmanship

Socially and Emotionally

- Demonstrate a strong work ethic
- Know and practice the importance of respecting oneself, others, and property

ADMISSION POLICIES

Age Requirements

When entering the Early Learning Program, students must be age 3 or 4 by October 31 of the year he or she starts school. A birth certificate is required to verify age.

Toilet Training Requirements

All students must be toilet-trained before beginning classes.

Admission Guidelines

Students are accepted into Saint Mark's Early Learning Program into either the PK-3, PK-3/4 or PK-4 class(es). In the event that the school cannot accept all applicants, priority is given to children who are active members of SMLC, qualified alumni children, and siblings of current Saint Mark students.

Admission to the school shall be with the understanding that parents have familiarized themselves with the philosophy and policies of Saint Mark Lutheran School and agree to abide by them.

The admission procedures generally entail completing the application for admission and supporting documentation as applicable, providing copies of all previous academic records (report cards or other formal assessments), getting teacher reference forms, and participating in group assessments when applicable. Parent interviews may also be requested. Admission procedures are detailed in the application packet which is available in the school office and on the school website. Please call the Admissions Coordinator at 247-5589 or visit the website at www.smls-hawaii.org for more information.

After admission to the school and when updates are requested, parents must submit a completed: **Tuberculosis Clearance** (PPD or chest x-ray) that meets state requirements; **Form 14** (Student's Health Record including their physical exam and immunization records); and **Form 908** (Early Childhood Pre-K Health Record Supplement including, if applicable, any screening information, medical conditions, and/or Special Care Plan(s) and recommendations as needed.) See HEALTH POLICIES on page 3 for more details.

Re-Enrollment for PK-3 Students going into PK-4

Children are accepted for enrollment into Saint Mark's Early Learning Program for one school year. The parents of all PK-3 and PK-3/4 students must complete the Re-enrollment procedures in January to assure that placement is maintained for the following year. Materials for re-enrollment are distributed to each school family to determine the number of students who will be returning the next school year. A non-refundable re-enrollment fee must be submitted with the re-enrollment forms to reserve a place for the child(ren).

No student is allowed to re-enroll unless all tuition and/or fees are paid in full. We commit ourselves to holding a space for children when we accept the registration, and we expect a commitment from our families in return. That is one reason the registration fee is non-refundable. When re-enrollment is complete, new applicants are accepted and classrooms filled. Waiting lists are formed for those who are interested in holding a place after a class is filled.

Re-Apply for PK-4 Students going into Kindergarten

At the end of the PK-4 year, parents are required to re-apply for admission into the Kindergarten class. It is an abbreviated process that is detailed in the admission procedures. Please call the Admissions Coordinator at 247-5589 or visit the website at www.smls-hawaii.org for more information.

Termination

A family may be asked to remove their child from the Early Learning Program for the following reasons: nonpayment of tuition or fees; health conditions that are communicable to others; abusive or inappropriate behavior by a parent in the classroom or on the campus directed at other parents, children, the faculty/staff; behavioral problems of the child that continue to disrupt and jeopardize the learning experiences for others; and inability of the school to properly meet the emotional, physical, or cognitive needs of the child.

TUITION & FEES

Tuition & Fees Schedule

You may choose to pay your tuition with one annual payment or ten monthly payments. Payment is due on the 20th day of each month, beginning in July and ending in April. A separate tuition and fee schedule has our current rates and is available in the school office and on the school website at www.smls-hawaii.org.

Non-Payment & Outstanding Accounts

In order for Saint Mark Lutheran School to continue offering the educational programs that every parent expects and each student deserves and in order for our school to remain fiscally responsible, tuition commitments must be honored. Students with past due accounts are subject to the policies outlined below:

- Accounts 10 days PAST DUE will be assessed a \$25 late fee.
- If the tuition is not paid on time in accordance with the payment plan that is chosen, Saint Mark Lutheran School may suspend or dismiss a student until the account is brought current. Tuition 60 days delinquent will be grounds for student dismissal.
- All accounts more than 60 days overdue are brought to the attention of the Board of Education and may be presented to collections.
- Students may not re-enroll for the following school year until all accounts are paid in full.

Financial Aid Available

Saint Mark offers a generous financial aid program and awards aid to families who show financial need. Financial assistance will be considered based on availability of funds, demonstrated financial need, academic performance, personal behavior, motivation, character and information provided on the Parents' Financial Statement (PFS). Saint Mark requires all financial aid applicants to complete the Parents' Financial Statement (PFS) through School Student Services (SSS) which is used to help determine financial eligibility.

Tuition Insurance & Refund

Saint Mark offers a Tuition Refund Plan (TRP) which provides insurance coverage in case a student withdraws or is dismissed from Saint Mark during the school year. The plan may not reimburse the full amount of the tuition due to Saint Mark depending on the circumstances. The person(s) responsible for tuition payment must pay the difference between the tuition and any TRP proceeds. The plan is sponsored by A.W.G. Dewar, Inc. which currently provides customized policies to more than 1,300 of the leading independent schools and colleges in the United States.

Participation in the TRP is required for those selecting the monthly payment plan and optional for families paying annually. The cost of the Plan is 2.95% of the student's tuition and is payable with first tuition payment due July 20.

HEALTH POLICIES

Prior to the first day of school, all students in Saint Mark Early Program are required to have on file: **Tuberculosis Clearance; Form 14** (Student's Health Record including their physical exam and immunization records); and **Form 908** (Early Childhood Pre-K Health Record Supplement including, if applicable, any screening information, medical conditions, and/or Special Care Plan(s) and recommendations as needed.)

Tuberculosis Clearance

All students must obtain a new (within previous year) tuberculosis clearance (PPD or chest x-ray) before entering Saint Mark Lutheran School. We require that all students leaving the country obtain a new tuberculosis clearance (PPD or chest x-ray) before returning to school.

Physical Examinations

All students must have a completed health form (**Form 14** and **Form 908**) on file in the school office. In-state transfers must obtain the original record from the last school attended or obtain a new one from their physician. A student whose health form is NOT CURRENT and NOT ON FILE in the school office are not allowed to attend & will be SENT HOME.

Immunizations

All students must have up-to-date immunizations that meet all state requirements. A State Health Form listing these requirements is available from your doctor. Saint Mark does not allow for exemptions to these requirements.

Medications

No medication will be stored or administered by school personnel in the Early Learning Program unless it is required by a licensed physician to be administered under life-threatening conditions, e.g. Epi-Pen® for anaphylaxis or inhaler for asthma. The doctor must provide a typed “Special Care Plan” for medical health needs in these circumstances, detailing specific symptom(s) and actions to take. The child’s parent or guardian must also sign an authorization slip for any medications included in the “Special Care Plan”. If a child requires medical treatment during the day, such as the use of a nebulizer, a parent is required to return to the school to administer medications, bringing any devices with them.

Epi-Pen®

Any child enrolling with an Epi-Pen® must wear a MedicAlert® bracelet at all times during the day to assist staff in ensuring that the appropriate precautions are taken to help keep your child safe.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen can be administered by school personnel in the Early Learning Program with written permission from parents. ***Sunscreen Application Authorization*** forms are available in the school office.

Illness

In order to ensure that all children have a healthy environment in which to play and to learn, we ask that you do not bring your child to school should your child show signs of an upcoming illness or develop any of the following:

- Fever of 100° F or above (A child may not return to school until he/she is fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication)
- Persistent, hacking cough
- Yellow/green mucous discharge from eyes or nose
- Vomiting more than once in 24 hours
- Loose bowel movements more than once in 24 hours
- Ear infection, throat infection, or eye infection with discharge, until on medication and released by the pediatrician for return to school
- Contagious illnesses/diseases including but not limited to chicken pox, measles, conjunctivitis, ringworm, impetigo, mumps, or roseola (These diseases will require a physician’s release for readmission to school)
- Head lice (ukus) or nits. (Regardless of the treatment used, all live ukus and nits must be removed before returning to school)
- Health conditions such as untreated allergies, colds, coughs, rash, or hives
- Any other contagious condition or condition that causes your child to be listless, irritable, excessive drowsiness or too uncomfortable to fully participate in the program

Upon returning to school following an illness, Saint Mark reserves that right to make the final determination as to eligibility to readmit to school and may require a doctor’s certificate for a particular illness or condition to ensure that it is no longer communicable.

When any of the above symptoms occur during the school day, parents are expected to pick up their child as quickly as possible. If you cannot come within 1 hour, please make arrangements for someone else to pick up your child. If symptoms of illness are observed by staff upon child’s arrival, the child will not be admitted to the school that day. Saint Mark reserves the right to send your child home if they are unable to fully participate in the program.

First Aid & Emergency Care

When a **simple injury** occurs, Saint Mark will care for it in school with basic first aid, and an incident form describing the accident will be given to the parent. In the event of a **more serious injury**, Saint Mark will call parents to discuss the injury and the possibility of calling 911. In the **event of an emergency**, Saint Mark will immediately call 911 and then contact the parents (or the listed emergency contact if parents are not immediately reachable) to meet their child at Adventist Health Castle Medical Center, 640 Ulukahiki St, Kailua, HI 96734.

Nut Aware

Saint Mark’s Early Learning Program has made accommodations for children severely allergic to nuts and nut products. Keiki Gourmet does not serve food with nuts, and parents must understand that Saint Mark’s Early Learning Program is “Nut Aware”. As such, parents of children in the Early Learning Program must ensure that all food they provide to their children at school is **nut free**. For example, peanut butter is not permitted in the Early Learning Program.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE POLICIES

Pickup & Drop-Off Procedures

Parking lot traffic before and after school needs to flow quickly, smoothly, and safely. All dropping-off and picking-up MUST be done in front of the Early Learning Center. The driveway and parking lot are designed for one-way traffic, so all vehicles must enter the parking lot in the designated entrance and leave via the designated exit. The proper flow of traffic is indicated with painted directional arrows. To maintain a safe and efficient flow, parents are NOT to park or exit their vehicle at arrival or departure. If parents need to conduct business in the school office, it is to be done at times other than drop-off or pick-up. And all classroom visits must be scheduled ahead of time.

School Day

The school opens at 7:15 a.m. with the formal instruction beginning at 8:00 a.m. and closes for normal operation at 3:15 p.m. Extended care is available from 6:30 to 7:15 a.m. and from 3:15 to 5:30 p.m.

Morning Drop-Off

7:15 to 7:55 a.m. – Parents are to drop-off PK students in front of the Early Learning Center and sign-in their child(ren) curbside. Staff will assist with this process and make certain that the students are walked safely from the vehicles to the classroom. Parents are not permitted to park and walk their child(ren) to class.

Afternoon Pick-Up

3:00 to 3:15 p.m. – Parents are to pick-up PK students in front of the Early Learning Center and sign-out their child(ren) curbside. Staff will assist with this process and make certain that the students are walked safely to the vehicles. Parents are not permitted to park and walk onto the campus.

Extended Day Care (Before and After Care)

6:30 to 7:15 a.m. - Parents are required to park and walk their child(ren) directly to the classroom door and then sign-in.

3:15 to 5:30 p.m. - Parents are required to park and walk into the classroom door to pick up and sign-out their child.

Students who are not enrolled in Extended Day Care, but arrive to school before 7:15 a.m., must be escorted to Before School Care where parents must sign them in and will be charged a Before School Care fee.

Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedures

The State requires that all children must be both signed in and signed out every day with a signature and a time notation. The school shall assume responsibility for child(ren) after they have been signed in by a parent or guardian and shall retain responsibility until the child is signed out by a parent, guardian or designated representative of the child's parents or guardians.

Parents are to notify staff if some other authorized person will be picking up your child that day. In addition, unfamiliar persons will be asked to show a picture ID which will be checked against your authorized pick-up list. Parents should be prepared to present a photo ID to staff the first few days of enrollment and/or when new staff is present.

Authorized Adults for Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Parents can authorize other adults to sign-in and sign-out their children at school by completing the proper paperwork in the school office. Parents are responsible for notifying office staff, in writing, in advance as to any changes in the names of individuals authorized to pick up their children. The State requires the authorized person's name, relation to the child, address, and home and business phone numbers to be on-file in the school office.

In the case of emergency, last minute verbal approvals can be given but only by the parent with primary custody, and the following procedures must be followed:

- Parent with primary custody calls the school, identifying self by providing name and relationship
- Parent then provides school with name, relationship to child, and phone number and address of the person authorized for the emergency pick-up
- Parent informs authorized person to be prepared to present picture ID.
- Phone authorizations may be made in emergencies only
- Parents should add this person's name to the authorized list the next day

Restricting Parental Contact

In cases of legal-guardian separation or divorce, the court's legal documents need to be provided to the school to assure custody. Saint Mark will not restrict parental custody, contact or visitation rights to the child without a certified court order. In the case of a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO), custody can be withheld only for the duration and per specifications of the order. In any case, if either parent's condition at the time of the pick-up clearly poses a threat to the child (parent is clearly under the influence of drugs/alcohol and normal function is impaired) the child will not be released to the parent. Staff will attempt to contact alternate authorized persons and may, ultimately, contact authorities.

Saint Mark will not issue letters requested by any party documenting who has been dropping off or picking up a child, or make any other statements regarding situations for either party to use in court. We will issue statements in custody issues only with a subpoena issued by the court.

Failure to Pick Up Child

Should a child remain at school after closing time, Saint Mark staff will make every effort to contact the parents and/or all other listed authorized pick-up people to verify that an authorized person is able to reach the school and pick up the child within the hour. Saint Mark cannot and will not allow "other authorized pick-up" persons to authorize a third party to pick up a child. Only the parent with primary custody can verbally authorize another person for emergency pick-up as detailed in the "Authorized Adults for Drop-Off and Pick-Up" section.

As of one hour after closing, if the school is unable to confirm that an authorized person is on the way to the school to pick up the child, school staff will call and report the situation to the Honolulu Police Department (HPD). They have the ability to check the local hospitals and police units to determine whether or not the parent(s) have been involved in an accident. If circumstances necessitate it, HPD will take the child into protective custody until parental status can be confirmed. For any reason other than medical emergency/crisis, parents will be charged related late pick-up fees.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance

The school day in the Early Learning Program begins at 8:00 a.m. It is critical to your child's sense of security and well-being that they be dropped off no later than 8:00 a.m. so he or she has time to settle in and separation occurs naturally. Your child is marked tardy or absent after 8:00 a.m.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential if a student is to make full use of the educational opportunities the school offers. Regular attendance develops dependability and responsibility in the student and contributes to his or her academic achievement. Excessive absences and tardiness interfere with a student's learning and hampers academic achievement.

Reporting Absence

If a student will be absent or arriving at school after 8:00 a.m., a parent or guardian must call the school office no later than 8:00 a.m.

Extended & other Projected Absences

It is in the best interest of the student's education that absence from school for reasons other than illness be kept to a minimum. Parents are strongly advised to plan family trips during scheduled school holidays and breaks. Children who return to the classroom after an extended absence often experience difficulties in readjusting to the daily routines or group activities. Doctor and dental appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible to avoid disruption. In the event that a student needs to be kept out of school for an extended period of time, written notification must be submitted to the office.

COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Effective communication between home and school is essential to providing a healthy, productive and trustworthy educational experience for our families. Thus, Saint Mark Lutheran School strives for open, genuine, and respectful communication through phone calls, e-mails, notes, newsletters, website(s), social media posts, text alerts, progress reports, report cards and conferences. Christian love demands consistent communication, collaboration, and cooperation between school, parents and students.

Communication is Crucial

At a minimum, parents should be contacted/consulted when special help is needed, the child is failing, the child is injured and a doctor's aid is required, there is a major behavior problem or if it is necessary to send the child home.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are one important way to keep the lines of communication open between home and school. Conferences help facilitate the flow of information both ways as we all work together in the best interests of the children. For this reason, Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in the fall. However, since the need for a conversation/conference is not restricted to school scheduled times, both parents and teachers are encouraged to contact one another any time they feel it necessary.

Parent Concerns & Conflict Resolution

Saint Mark Lutheran School values parent feedback regarding all aspects of services including the manner in which policies and procedures are implemented and overall staff performance. Occasionally, despite best efforts, situations occur which may give parents cause for concern. In those cases, parents are encouraged to share questions or concerns with the appropriate staff member(s) and work together to come to a resolution that provides the best possible learning environment for the students of Saint Mark.

It is the sincere hope of Saint Mark that Matthew 18:15-21 be the guide for dealing with all concerns and conflicts. This entails parents to first speak personally and privately, and in Christian love, with the person with whom they have a complaint or concern. If that does not resolve the problem, they can take it up with the next level of authority, and so on. Conflicts can also be escalated to DHS Child Licensing Unit II at 808-675-0470. The goal is always to restore relationships and, in so doing, promote sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it is always good to remember that a note or a phone call can often prevent simple problems from becoming serious. All high stakes talks and phone calls to teachers should be made after school hours.

Parental Comportment & Support of School

Saint Mark expects parents, guardians and other related individuals to treat all faculty, staff, administration and members of the school community (including other parents and students) respectfully and professionally. Saint Mark reserves the right to limit the access of parents and related individuals on campus and/or at school sponsored or school related events; to suspend, dismiss, expel, or otherwise remove a student from the school; or to decline to re-enroll the student, if the school's administration in their sole discretion determines that the actions, behavior, communications, or interactions on or off campus of the student's parents or related individuals impede the school's ability to meet its educational objectives or mission, disrupt school operations, are uncooperative, unreasonable, or unsupportive of the school, its faculty or staff, or make it impossible to have a positive or constructive relationship with the parents or related individuals.

Parental Separation or Divorce Disagreement

In the cases of legal-guardian separation or divorce, the court's legal documents need to be provided to the school to assure custody. The court-directed custodial legal guardian will receive school communications. It shall be the custodial legal guardian's responsibility to share that information with the other legal guardian.

CURRICULUM & GOALS

Saint Mark offers a forward thinking, collaborative learning environment that prepares our students to be life-long learners, well-equipped with the 21st century skills needed to succeed in high school and their lives beyond. Saint Mark strives to create a caring atmosphere where students are pushed to do their best yet feel safe enough to take risks and explore their learning and curiosity without a fear of failure. Students need to be able to make mistakes knowing that they are loved and that failure is an important part of the learning process. Saint Mark's Early Learning Program incorporates a well-balanced and developmentally appropriate approach that provides a strong educational foundation for future success.

The *Creative Curriculum*®, a high quality, systematic, research-based program, will be used in all classes. It meets both Hawaii Preschool Content Standards and the Hawaii Early Learning and Development Standards. The lessons provide clear direction for the teachers to address academic content, yet never lose sight of the primary importance of social-emotional development in children's learning. This comprehensive curriculum addresses all of the important areas of learning: social-emotional development, oral language and vocabulary, emergent writing, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, physical development and technology. The curriculum also allows children to explore their own interests through student-initiated learning while also providing explicit teacher-directed instruction in early language, reading and math skills.

Saint Mark Lutheran School's mission is to extend the love and care of Jesus Christ to all people, while nurturing families and preparing students to integrate faith with life, through quality Christ-centered education. With that, Concordia's *One in Christ* will be used to teach our youngest students about the Love of Christ.

LUNCH & SNACKS

Parents may choose to sign up their child for school lunch, or children may bring home lunch. A monthly lunch menu will be posted online and in each classroom. Lunch is served family style and eaten in the preschool classrooms. The lunch menu is determined by *Keiki Gourmet* caterer. Keiki Gourmet's rotating menus are created in strict accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Their menus meet or exceed the nutrition standards required and include culturally appropriate dishes for the children of Hawaii. Lunches must be ordered monthly and paid for by the 25th of each month. Forms and pricing are available in the school office.

If bringing a home lunch, it should be a box lunch that does not require heating as the ELC rooms do not have microwave ovens. Lunch boxes should have the child's name written clearly on the containers. Lunch boxes will be sent home daily. Saint Mark highly discourages highly-sugared treats at any time and prohibits soda for students in the Early Learning Program.

The following are some suggestions for healthy lunches:

- ½ sandwich or soup
- fruit or vegetable
- finger foods (e.g., crackers, fruit slices, etc.)
- reduced fat or non-fat milk
- soy milk or orange juice for lactose-intolerant children

Students need to bring their own snacks to school. The following are some suggestions for healthy snacks:

- Milk group: mozzarella or string cheese, cheese cubes, yogurt, milk-based drinks made with fruit or fruit juices
- Fruit/vegetable group: 100% fruit juices, such as apple, grape, orange, pears, banana slices, cherry tomatoes, fresh melons or berries, raisins or granola with dried fruits, fruit slices, carrots, celery, zucchini
- Bread group: mini-bagels, bagel chips, rice cakes, Triscuits, low-salt cheese crackers, soda crackers, graham crackers

Snack and lunch time are important parts of life routines in the classroom that offer a broad range of learning experiences for each child including the study of nutrition, serving, and the proper handling of utensils, cleanliness, and manners. Students are not to share food brought from home.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

Students participate in busy, active, and occasionally messy play at school. As such, children in the Early Learning Program are expected to come to school in the school uniform t-shirt and any comfortable shorts or long pants. Shorts should be easy to remove in the bathroom. All clothing should be marked with the child's name. The uniform t-shirts and collared jerseys (if one is desired) are ordered directly through Pueo Print.

Shoes (e.g., tennis or athletic) should be safe for climbing and running. Rubber slippers, Crocs™, boots, or party shoes are not safe for daily play and should not be worn to school. Children who do not wear safe shoes will not be allowed on the play structure, playground or any other outdoor learning. Students are encouraged to wear athletic shoes that are easy to get on and off (e.g. slip on and Velcro style shoes).

Each child will need a complete change of clothes. Each article of clothing needs to be labeled and stored in a plastic bag to be kept in your child's cubby. Soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag when the parent comes in to pick up the child. Saint Mark will not assume responsibility for lost/stained clothing or damaged/lost items brought to school by your child.

BEHAVIOR RULES & EXPECTATIONS

Children in their early years are learning about the world around them and how they fit into it. Children need adults to help them develop self-control and empathy. The ultimate goal is for each child to be able to control their own behavior and to understand how their behavior impacts others.

Well-thought-out and clearly defined rules help children to understand the expectations of the teacher and to have a successful experience in school. Rules are best kept simple and few in number for young children. In addition, rules that tell children what they should do verses what they should not do are best. While each teacher may have rules specific to his/her classroom, there are four overarching rules that are consistent throughout Saint Mark's Early Learning Program. The four rules along with some examples of specific related expectations are listed as follows (Teachers will generally relate situations back to one of these rules):

1. Be Kind to Others

- Treat people with respect
- Take turns

2. Be Safe

- Push your chair in
- Walk while inside
- Use chairs for sitting

3. Take Care of Property

- Put toys and games away after using them
- Treat equipment carefully

4. Use Your Words

- Ask for a turn with the toy instead of grabbing it away from the other child

Children need limits in order to feel secure about themselves and their environment, and it is a natural process for children to test those limits that adults set for them. The Saint Mark staff will use positive guidance techniques including redirection and logical consequences to help guide children's behavior. An important part of this process is providing children with the support they need to learn to express their feelings and needs in acceptable ways.

In normal situations, staff will use positive guidance techniques to address challenging behavior. Time out will only be used in extreme situations when the safety and well-being of students is at risk. There will be no negative verbal or physical methods of punishment used. Parents will be notified by phone if there is an incident of challenging behavior that interferes with your child's learning or the learning of others. Incidents of extreme aggression may be grounds for immediate release from the program. Please refer to Behavior Expectations for further information.

Behavior Expectations

To fully benefit from Saint Mark's Early Learning Program, students must show signs of developmental readiness and be able to do the following upon entering into the program:

- Be fully toilet trained
- Dress/undress self
- Feed self with a fork/spoon and drink from a cup, and at a minimum consume fluids at lunch and snack
- Separate from parents/caregivers with minimum disruption
- Understand and follow simple one-step directions with minimal reminders
- Participate in daily activities and classroom routines independently with minimal reminders
- Stay with the group; does not wander away or attempt to leave the classroom
- Demonstrate behaviors which do not pose an immediate threat to self, others, or property

Children newly enrolled will be expected to show these proficiencies during their first four weeks of enrollment. If there are concerns, the teaching staff will provide clear feedback on the child's progress on a weekly basis. If the child does not meet these expectations within four weeks of entering, the child will be released. Inability to self-regulate, such as extended tantrums, running away, extended separation distress, non-compliance with classroom routines, and self-injury are also grounds for release if they continue beyond the first four weeks of enrollment.

In addition, the occurrence of five incidents of behaviors that pose a threat to self, others, or property, within a 12-month period, which may include and are not limited to biting, hitting/slapping, kicking, choking, pinching, scratching, forceful pushing or shoving a peer or teacher, inappropriate language, inappropriate sexual behaviors as well as throwing toys/chairs and/or attempting to push over furniture, will result in your child's release from the program.

Saint Mark Lutheran School reserves the right to make judgment as to what is considered appropriate/inappropriate behavior.

EMERGENCY/SECURITY POLICIES

Emergency Closing of School

In the event of a school closure due to inclement weather or a campus emergency, Saint Mark will keep parents and employees informed of the school's status via text and email messaging systems, website, phones, social media, and traditional media. Parents can also tune into KSSK Radio (AM 590 or FM 92.3) or local TV stations for notification of school closures.

Should early dismissal from school be necessary but parents cannot be reached or if no arrangements are made for students, these children will be kept at school or evacuated until such arrangements can be made. Ben Parker Elementary School is the nearest Civil Defense Evacuation Shelter.

Parents and guardians are asked to always have their current contact information updated in order to receive phone and email messages and updates during an emergency situation.

Refer to the *Emergency Crisis Procedures* for more information.

WORSHIP

Student Worship Life

An important part of the Christian education that we offer to a child is the opportunity to participate in a rich worship life. A child is to become aware that his or her entire life should itself be an act of worship. In addition, the child will be exposed to a variety of worship methods and should have the opportunity to use his or her creativity to plan and write worship experiences.

Christian Education Classes

Worship is an important part of the daily religion instruction. Bible stories, scripture readings, special prayers and often spiritual songs play an important role in student worship. Concordia's One in Christ will be used to teach our youngest students about the Love of Christ.

Prayer

Students will start and end their school day with prayer and will have an opportunity to ask God's blessing on their meal and also thank Him for it in prayers before meals.

Chapel

The K-8 student body meets weekly for a formal worship service. A monthly mission emphasis helps make the child aware that God's work is not limited to our area. Members of the staff take turns leading chapel services; teachers are encouraged to be creative and include student participation in planning their chapel presentations. The Early Learning Students occasionally participates in chapel.

PHOTO CONSENT & RELEASE

Saint Mark Lutheran School reserves the right to publish and copyright all still and videotaped photographs in which students appear while enrolled in any and all programs at Saint Mark Lutheran School.

Saint Mark Lutheran School may transfer, use or cause to be used, these images in school brochures, newsletters, advertising, posters, displays, slide shows, videotapes, websites, catalogs, and like publications or literature without limitations, reservations or compensation.

The use of an image does not constitute in any manner a waiver of Saint Mark Lutheran School policies, program or rules, nor does continued use constitute an agreement to continue the child's enrollment.

Contact the school office for the non-consent **Photo Release** form if you do not want your child to be a part of public relations.

CALENDAR

The Saint Mark Lutheran School academic calendar shall accommodate the educational program of the school. Saint Mark Lutheran School follows the public school calendar as closely as possible when planning breaks and major holidays. However, we will have additional days off, different from the public schools, for such activities as teacher in-services and conferences, parent/teacher conferences, professional development, Good Friday, and Easter Monday.

The school calendar is available in the school office and on the school website at www.smls-hawaii.org.

FIELD TRIPS & TRANSPORTATION

Saint Mark's Early Learning Program may occasionally participate in an off-campus excursion to help enhance student learning. These excursions are designed to meet curriculum goals and create a positive learning experience for the students. Care is taken to ensure that the experience is appropriate to the development of the child.

Precautions are taken to ensure student safety on all school trips. The Saint Mark staff carries a first aid kit and will have cell phones to call for help whenever necessary while on a trip.

If parents prefer that their child not join the class on excursions, or do not sign the **Excursion Consent Form**, or arrive after the bus has left, they will need to make other childcare arrangements for that day.

If your child has difficulty managing behaviors, he or she may not be allowed to join the class on excursions.

Field Trip Permission Forms

Parents are asked to sign a general blanket Field Trip Permission Form at the beginning of the school year in addition to specific individual permission forms before each trip is taken. Students without a signed form will not participate on the excursion. Parents may occasionally be asked to pay a small fee to help defray field trip costs.

Transportation

Saint Mark reserves chartered school buses from Roberts Hawaii or Ground Transportation for all Early Learning Program excursions. School buses in Hawaii are not required to be equipped with seat belts. Saint Mark Lutheran School does not provide transportation to and from school for students.

OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES

Rest Time

All children are expected to rest for a period of time on a daily basis. This time generally falls between 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Children will sleep on a mat with a personal blanket (and a stuffed animal if they want) brought from home. All personal blankets are not to be shared and are to be brought home at the end of each week to be washed and then are to be returned at the beginning of the following week.

Sanitation

Tables are washed and sanitized and floors are swept after each meal. Toys are picked up after use and are sanitized as needed. In the event of any type of communicable disease outbreak, special sanitation procedures are followed by teaching staff and custodians.

Insurance

Saint Mark Lutheran School carries general liability coverage.

Fundraising

Saint Mark as an independent school relies on charitable gifts to offset its operating costs and to make the continual improvements necessary to help provide the highest possible quality education. As such, families are invited to participate in school fundraising activities and events. All gifts, no matter the size, have an impact on the school's overall stability now and in the years to come.

Children's Personal Belongings

Children are allowed to bring a favorite stuffed animal or blanket for security to help them with separation from their parents. These items are to be kept in their cubbies. Items not allowed to be brought to preschool include toys, electronic devices, pacifiers, bottles, sippy cups, pets or other animals, gum, candy, soda, money, and any valuable personal items.

Grooming

During the day, staff grooming of children shall be limited to, with the child's permission, securing hair with child's own clips, barrettes, ponytails, and simple braids, etc. when the hair seems to be getting in the child's way, or has been loosened by play or napping.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special times for young children. Saint Mark likes to celebrate their importance at school, and encourages families in the Early Learning Program to donate a birthday book in their child's name to the classroom library. The teachers will be able to provide a recommended-book list. The donated book should be brought to school before the birthday so the child can prepare a personalized book label with his/her name. The donated book will be read on the child's special day.

If parents choose to bring a birthday snack to school, please bring fruit, muffins, yogurt, or popcorn rather than high sugar foods which are highly discouraged. Saint Mark does not allow balloons and candles to be brought to school and asks that birthday invitations for parties outside the school may not be distributed. Treat bags are unnecessary.

Volunteers

Parental volunteers are an important component of the total learning process at Saint Mark Lutheran School. Opportunities for parent volunteers are numerous and any parents wishing to volunteer their time and talents should contact the school office and their child's teacher to inquire.

PTC

The Parent-Teacher Committee (PTC) is a voluntary parent teacher organization with the goal of helping to improve and enhance the learning environment for the students of Saint Mark Lutheran School. Each year a PTC committee is formed and regular meetings are scheduled. All parents willing to serve on this committee are urged to contact the school office.

Visitors to Campus with Appointment Only

All visitors to Saint Mark Lutheran School during school hours must make an appointment and check in at the school office and in some cases obtain a visitor badge before going anywhere else on campus. Visitors to campus are defined as anyone not employed by Saint Mark Lutheran School or Church. If parents need to conduct business in the school office, it is to be done at times other than drop-off or pick-up.

Group Child Care License

Saint Mark is licensed with the State of Hawaii's Department of Human Services for no more than 60 children between the ages of 2 years 8 months and 6 years. The license indicates the school's compliance with the applicable rules as established by the Department of Human Services.

Reporting Policy

Saint Mark shall report to the Department of Human Services, within one working day of occurrence, the death of a child, employee, or household member, and any illness or injury received at the child care facility that results in a child's hospitalization. Saint Mark shall report to authorities any suspected child abuse or neglect in accordance with all lawful mandatory reporting requirements in Chapter 350, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Disclosure of Information Policy

Information pertaining to an individual child or parents of the child will not be disclosed to persons other than the Saint Mark staff or the Department of Human Services unless the parents or guardians of the child grant written permission for the disclosure or an emergency arises. A ***Release of Information*** form is available in the school office to be signed by the parent or guardian permitting the school to release any information about their child or family.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Children enrolled in the school shall have an equal opportunity for a quality Christian education without discrimination regardless of their race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, or disability so long as it does not create a hard ship for the students, faculty or staff. The education program shall be free of such discrimination and provide equal opportunity for the participants. The education program shall foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for the historical, contemporary, and Christian contributions to society of diverse cultural groups. It shall provide equal education opportunity to both genders.