



Lago Vista
Independent School District

**Little Vikings
Learning Center
Employee Handbook**

Lago Vista Independent School District Little Vikings Learning Center Employee Handbook

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DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Lago Vista ISD will equip students for the rigors of the 21st century by preparing them for a global-based digital economy. Lago Vista ISD will be recognized as a leader in educational innovation through technology, facilities, curriculum, volunteerism, and instruction.

LITTLE VIKINGS MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Little Vikings Learning Center is to provide Lago Vista ISD and the community with affordable and timely daycare options. Our mission is to provide exemplary learning, play, and social opportunities for all children enrolled in the Little Vikings Learning Center.

LITTLE VIKINGS PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Little Vikings Learning Center is available to all persons who are long-term employees of the District, with any unfilled spots offered to the public. Availability will be reassessed annually with District employees receiving first priority followed by current enrollees. Day-to-day substitute teachers may not utilize the learning center because they are not employed on a regular basis, and the program is such that drop-ins are disruptive. However, persons employed as a long-term substitute may utilize the Little Vikings Learning Center.

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Getting Started

About Us

- The Little Vikings Learning Center is located in the portable building adjacent to Lago Vista Elementary School. The address is 20311 Dawn Drive in Lago Vista, Texas. To contact the Little Vikings Learning Center by phone, please call the main line at (512) 267-8300. To submit inquiries by email, please contact the Little Vikings Learning Center Director, Elvira Stavrowsky, at elvira_stavrowsky@lagovista.txed.net.
- The primary purpose of the Little Vikings Learning Center is to provide high quality childcare for the employees of Lago Vista ISD. By providing a child care program for our employees, Lago Vista ISD strives to assist our employees in building strong family lives and a solid, stable workforce. If space is available, enrollment is extended to non-employee children as a service to the Lago Vista community.
- Little Vikings Learning Center staff members are carefully selected based on their training, experience, and nurturing qualities. They will use a variety of instructional tools as part of a flexible, well-balanced curriculum, and receive continuing training on an ongoing basis.

Hours of Operation

- The Little Vikings Learning Center follows the Lago Vista ISD teacher calendar (Mid-August to late May or early June). Childcare is provided every day that teachers are required to report to work.
- The hours of operation for the Little Vikings Learning Center are 7:15am – 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.
- Children may be dropped off in the classroom no earlier than 7:15am.
- An approved adult must pick up children by no later than 4:30pm. A fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for children who are picked up late. **Staff members are expected to document late pick-ups and communicate it to the Little Vikings Learning Center Director for billing.**
- If Lago Vista ISD cancels school, the Little Vikings Learning Center will also be closed. If Lago Vista ISD operates on a one- or two-hour late start due to weather conditions, the Little Vikings Learning Center will also operate on a one- or two-hour late start. Credit will not be offered to parents for these days.

Criminal Background

- In accordance with Texas law, the Little Vikings Learning Center will not employ someone who has a criminal record.
- All staff members must undergo a criminal records check and fingerprint criminal background check prior to beginning work at the Center.
- In addition, all staff members must report any incidents, such as any arrest or conviction, which may change their criminal record immediately to the Center Director. In no case shall a staff member wait more than five (5) days to inform the Center Director of a change in his or her criminal background status. Violation of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Pre-Employment and Annual Training Requirements

- Texas law provides minimum training requirements for Center staff members that are enforced by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care.
- Staff members hired by the Little Vikings Learning Center who have no previous training or less than two (2) years of employment experience in a regulated child-care facility or employment in a child care facility must complete eight (8) hours of initial training before the staff member is given responsibility for a group of children.
- Additionally, staff members with no previous training or less than two (2) years of experience in a regulated childcare facility must complete twenty four (24) hours of initial training that must be completed within ninety (90) days of employment.
- Annually, each staff member of the Center is required to complete twenty four (24) hours of training, which must include at least six (6) hours of training in one (1) or more of the following areas: child growth and development; guidance and discipline; age appropriate curriculum; and teacher-child interaction. For more information regarding acceptable training courses under Texas state law, consult the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care.
- One hundred percent (100%) of Little Vikings Learning Center staff members are required to receive and maintain certification in First Aid and Infant, Child and Adult CPR. Hours acquired during this training do not count toward the required training by the State of Texas.
- Evidence, in its original form, of each staff member's satisfaction of the initial and/or continued training requirements must be retained by the Little Vikings Learning Center. These training requirements are imposed by state law and cannot be altered by the Center. Staff members who fail to meet these training requirements will be disciplined, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Staff Immunizations Required for Employment

- Since group settings increase the risk of vaccine preventable diseases, ensuring appropriate immunization is an essential responsibility. All employees at the Little Vikings Learning Center are required to maintain and provide written documentation of compliance with the following immunizations:
 - Pertussis (Whooping Cough) [DTap or Tdap]
 - Influenza (Flu)
- Additional immunizations against vaccine-preventable diseases will be determined for employees based on the level of risk the employee presents to children and vice-versa as a result of the employee's routine and direct exposure to children. All records of compliance with this requirement will be maintained in the Little Vikings Learning Center.
- An employee may be exempt from having a required vaccine because of medical conditions identified as contraindications or precautions by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. Employees who are exempt from required vaccinations must follow additional precautions to protect children from exposure to disease, such as the use of protective medical equipment, including gloves and masks. Additional precautions will be determined based

on the level of risk the employee presents to children and vice-versa as a result of the employee's routine and direct exposure to children. Lago Vista ISD and the Little Vikings Learning Center are prohibited from discrimination or retaliatory action against an exempt employee, except that required use of protective medical equipment, including gloves and masks, may not be considered retaliatory action for these purposes.

- Employees who fail to comply with this requirement will be removed from the care of children and are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

An important part of providing quality care to children is to ensure their safety and health at all times. Children under the age of three (3) are most vulnerable to abuse. Child care providers can play an important part in protecting the health and safety of children by responsibly reporting all suspected incidents of physical, sexual, emotional, and/or neglectful abuse. Furthermore, we want to ensure that all Little Vikings Learning Center staff members are aware of their legal responsibilities as a mandatory reporter of suspected child abuse. Without exception, the Little Vikings Learning Center will report any suspected acts of abuse.

Staff members may have reason to suspect child abuse if:

1. The child verbally expresses that he/she has been abused by an individual;
2. Another individual says that a child has been abused;
3. There is physical evidence of unexplained injury;
4. Explanations of injuries are inconsistent between parent/guardian and child.

The procedure of reporting suspected child abuse can be very sensitive, complicated, and sometimes uncomfortable. It is important that the following procedure is followed closely.

- When a staff member becomes suspicious of child abuse, the staff member shall immediately report the suspicion to the Little Vikings Learning Center Director within one hour of such suspicion.
- If the staff member is uncertain whether there is sufficient reason to suspect abuse, the staff member should notify the Director or other person in charge of his/her concern. In either case, together, they shall determine whether there is reason to suspect and whether to call the appropriate authorities.
- There shall be no discussion with other staff members, parents/guardians, children, or other individuals within or outside the Center. The staff member and the Director shall prepare a written report documenting the circumstances.
- If and when it has been determined there is reason to suspect child abuse, the Director shall notify the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent and ensure that the staff member who made the initial report notifies the proper authorities immediately.
- There shall be no further discussion concerning the issue within the Center except between the staff member who made the initial report and the Director.

- Little Vikings Learning Center staff may not interview the child for more information regarding the suspected abuse. The proper authorities shall be the only agency to interview the child regarding the suspected abuse.
- Staff members shall not disclose any information related to the incident, unless specifically authorized to do so by the Director or otherwise compelled by law.
- Reports of suspected child abuse may be made to the Texas Department of Family and Protected services by phone (1-800-252-5400) or online at https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp.

Reporting Accidents and Incidents

- Safety is everyone's responsibility.
- In the event of an accident with a child, staff members must immediately report the incident to the Director. The Director will help to ensure that the child receives appropriate attention and that parents/guardians are informed of the incident.
- For accidents and incidents, you must use a Licensing Incident/Illness Report form, or other form containing at least the same information, to record information regarding injuries that required medical attention by a health-care professional and any other situation that placed a child at risk, such as not preventing a child from wandering away from the child-care center unsupervised. After the caregiver completes the form, the Little Vikings Learning Center Director, or if the director is not available, the person in charge of the center must sign and date the completed report.

Employee Expectations

Arrival and Time Keeping

- Staff members are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to receive students beginning at 7:15am.
- All staff members are expected to keep an accurate record of hours worked. Each staff member is required to record his or her hours of work for the Center through the use of our electronic timeclock. Time must be recorded as follows:
 - Immediately before beginning work in the morning.
 - Immediately after completing work before lunch.
 - Immediately before resuming work after lunch.
 - Immediately after completing work in the evening.
 - Immediately before and after any other time away from work or leaving the premises.

- Staff members must clock out for any non-working time (other than brief breaks) such as time away from the Center for errands, doctor appointments, leaving premises, etc.
- Under no circumstances may any staff member clock in or out for another staff member or ask another staff member to clock in or out for them. Clocking in or out for another staff member may result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment.
- **Overtime:** All hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek are overtime hours. All staff members must have overtime approved by the Director. For purposes of calculating overtime, only actual hours of work will be considered. Paid time off is not considered for purposes of calculating overtime.

Classroom Furnishings/Equipment/Décor

- Any furniture/equipment/decor in the Little Vikings Learning Center must be child-safe and serve a specific age-appropriate function. The Director must approve any additions to the furniture/equipment in the classroom in advance.
- All furnishings should be easy to clean and sanitize. Corners should be rounded. No unnecessary pinching hazards should be present.
- Each piece of furniture/equipment/decor must be evaluated for safety and stability:
 - Is this needed to serve an age-appropriate function for the classroom?
 - Is it safe for the children in the classroom?
 - Does it have rounded corners and child-safe hardware?
 - Is it stable and will it resist tipping?
 - Will it splinter or shatter?
 - Does it have protrusions, pinch hazards, or hard edges?
- All furniture/equipment that is needed for classroom function, but that could be pulled over, must be securely anchored to the wall.
- Cover any sharp corners on furniture/cabinets/walls.
- Cover all unused electrical outlets.
- Changing tables and high chairs must have straps which are used to secure the child.
- Cribs must be placed out of reach of windows and window blinds.
- Loop all window blind cords out of reach of children.
- Secure all medications and cleaning supplies in a locked cabinet out of reach of children.
- Inspect all toys/equipment before allowing them into the daycare to ensure that they are:
 - Clean
 - In good condition
 - Have no recalls
 - Do not present a choking hazard
 - Have nothing sharp or breakable

Cleaning

- Keeping the classrooms and the Little Vikings Learning Center clean at all times is critical. Parents/guardians often judge our Center on what they see and smell as they enter. Although our custodial staff does evening cleaning, it is expected that Little Vikings Learning Center staff members ensure a clean environment during the day.
- Be aware of bad odors, clutter, and cleanliness of all Little Vikings Learning Center facilities, inside and out.
- Wipe down flat surfaces and spot clean floors daily to ensure a clean appearance.
- Keep classroom bathrooms looking and smelling nice throughout the day.
- For safety reasons, keep doors and exits free of all toys, furniture, and other objects.
- Sanitize table tops, furniture, and other similar equipment used by children at least twice per week or when soiled or contaminated with matter such as food, body secretions, or excrement;
- Sanitize toys and equipment that are placed in children's mouths, or are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excrement, before handling by another child.
- Machine wash any cloth toys, if used, at least weekly and when contaminated.
- Sanitize sleeping equipment before a different child uses it and when soiled.
- Sanitize potty-chairs after each child's use.
- Between each diaper change, the diaper change surface shall be disinfected with a single-use disposable towel.
- Empty water play tables and toys used in water tables daily, sanitize them, and ensure that children and caregivers wash their hands before using a water table.
- Maintain sand boxes and sand tables in a sanitary manner.
- Never use the hand-washing sink or diaper-changing surface for food preparation, or for washing food service/preparation equipment, bottles, pacifiers or toys.
- Sanitize high chair trays before each use.
- Linens, furniture, fixtures, equipment, toys, and other classroom supplies should be regularly sanitized.
- Keep all garbage containers covered, make sure they are inaccessible to children, and take them out of the building daily.

Confidentiality

- Staff members may, by virtue of their employment with the Center, obtain access to sensitive, confidential information, including but not limited to children's records, information regarding family situations, etc.
- Staff members shall not, without the prior written consent of the Center, use, disclose, divulge, or publish to others any such confidential information acquired in the course of their employment.
- Conversations with parents regarding questions and/or concerns should not be done in the presence of the children.

- It is unlawful to release information pertaining to children enrolled at the Center without first obtaining written consent from the parents/guardians. Information relating to a child's family situation, medical status, and behavioral characteristics may be shared by Center staff members among caregivers on the Center's staff and with appropriate State agencies or other persons in emergency circumstances at the discretion of the Director.
- Unauthorized use or disclosure of confidential information may result in discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment, prosecution, or other available action.

Electronic Devices & Use

- Staff members must refrain from using electronic devices while on work time unless the usage is work-related. This includes social media.
- A staff member may use his/her cell phone or similar communication devices for personal use only during breaks when a staff member is clocked out. This includes taking personal phone calls, electronic communication, social media, etc.
- Staff members must obtain consent from parents/guardians prior to taking photos and/or recordings of children for any purpose. Staff members shall ask parents to let the Center know in writing if there are any restrictions related to photos and/or video recordings.
- Any photos or recordings of children may only be posted to the Little Vikings Facebook page with parent/guardian permission and may not be posted to personal social media accounts.

Emergency Drills/Situations

- On a regular basis, the Little Vikings Learning Center conducts fire drills, lockdown drills, and other emergency preparedness drills with Lago Vista Elementary School.
- The classrooms in the Little Vikings Learning Center will be contacted via phone by the Lago Vista Elementary School front office at the beginning of each drill (and during a real emergency).
- Each room has certain procedures they follow in these drills/emergency situations and it is expected that staff members are familiar with these procedures.
- Questions about procedures during emergency drills/situations should be addressed with the Director.

Hand Washing

- Staff members are expected to maintain excellent hand washing practices and to require them of children, as well.
- Research has shown the single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs in the child-care setting is good hand washing by caregivers and children.
- To eliminate the transmission of germs from the home environment, it is a best practice to require anyone entering the center (adult or child) to wash their hands immediately upon entering the Center.
- Staff members shall wash their hands for twenty (20) seconds using soap and warm running water:
 - (1) Before eating or handling food or medication;

- (2) Before feeding a child;
 - (3) After arriving at the child-care center;
 - (4) After diapering a child;
 - (5) After assisting a child with toileting;
 - (6) After personal toileting;
 - (7) After handling or cleaning bodily fluids, such as after wiping noses, mouths, or bottoms, and tending sores;
 - (8) After handling or feeding animals;
 - (9) After outdoor activities;
 - (10) After handling raw food products;
 - (11) After eating, drinking, or smoking;
 - (12) After using any cleaners or toxic chemicals;
 - (13) After removing gloves; and
 - (14) After playing in the gymnasium.
- Disposable gloves should be worn when the risk of bodily fluid is present. This pertains to urine, feces, mucus, saliva, blood, and when feeding breast milk to a child. Wearing gloves does not excuse a staff member from using the appropriate hand washing techniques once the gloves are removed and discarded.
 - Children's hands are to be washed:
 - (1) Before eating;
 - (2) Before playing in a water play table;
 - (3) After toileting or having a diaper changed;
 - (4) After outdoor activities;
 - (5) After playing in sand;
 - (6) After feeding or touching animals; and
 - (7) Any other time that the caregiver has reason to believe the child has come in contact with substances that could be harmful to the child.
 - Children shall wash hands for twenty (20) seconds using soap and warm running water.
 - Children under the age of 18 months may have their hands cleansed using a washcloth or sanitary cloth. An individual washcloth or sanitary cloth should be used for each child, not to be shared. You must wash the infant's hands using an individual cloth or disposable towel with soap, followed by a cloth or disposable towel used to rinse with clear water and dry. Washcloths should only be used one time between laundering.
 - The use of hand sanitizers should be used in moderation and should not be substituted for all hand washing. Hand sanitizer may only be used with children 24 months and older. Children must have adult supervision when using hand sanitizers to ensure that the labeling instructions are followed for the appropriate amount to be used and to ensure that the hand sanitizer remains on the skin surface for the appropriate amount of time needed to be effective. All hand sanitizer must be stored out of the reach of children.

Illness

- Under no circumstances shall any staff member or other person being supervised by the staff member come to work or be allowed in the Center who knowingly has or presents symptoms of fever, diarrhea, or any other contagious condition.
- Staff members must contact the Director as soon as possible to report their absence and maintain daily contact with the Director of their expected return to work.
- A physician's note may be required to substantiate periods of absence or to ensure that a staff member can return to work without presenting a risk to the children and other staff members at the Center.

Keys

- The Director will ensure that staff members are issued keys to classrooms, locked cabinets, or other secured areas, as needed.
- Keys must be safeguarded and must be returned at the end of employment.
- A fee will be charged to replace missing keys.

Parking

- Spaces directly in front of the portable building are reserved for parents/guardians picking up and dropping off only.
- Staff members are asked to park along the back of the parking area.

Personal Appearance

- Our Center's professional and caring atmosphere is maintained, in part, by the image we present to our children and parents/guardians. We expect all staff members to present a neat, well-groomed appearance and a courteous disposition.
- Staff members work directly with the children and may be sitting on the floor, running around the playground and otherwise engaging in activities that require flexible, yet appropriate, apparel. Close-toed shoes are strongly recommended to ensure safety.
- Staff members who report to work in unacceptable attire or appearance may be requested to leave work and return in acceptable attire or appearance. Such time away from work will be without pay.

Playground Supervision

- The outdoor play area is an extension of the indoor learning environment and should be treated as such. Staff members should be involved with the children, observing them at play, and guiding them toward productive activities.
- Each day, staff members shall make a complete walk around the playground to check conditions. Any hazardous conditions should be reported to the management immediately. Hazardous conditions include, but are not limited to, exposed rocks in the play areas, open "S" hooks on swings, mulch washed or kicked away from fall areas of play equipment, and insect or rodent infestation.
- In order to maintain maximum supervision during outdoor play, sitting is strongly discouraged and should never take away from active engagement with the children.

Requesting Supplies

- The Center will provide each staff member with the resources and materials necessary to maintain each classroom.
- In order to provide materials in a timely fashion, each responsible staff member must submit to the Director a request for supplies by close of business Monday of the week before they are needed.

Safety and Security Concerns

- Accidents, hazards and other safety concerns must be reported immediately to the Director. It is only through full knowledge of every accident that the Little Vikings Learning Center can remain a safe and healthy place for everyone to work.
- It is expected that the gate by the portal building be locked at all times during the Lago Vista Elementary School day. A visual inspection should be conducted to ensure that the gate is locked. As needed, staff members should remind parents to secure the gate as they enter and exit the gate.
- Classroom doors in the portable building should remain locked in the hours between drop off and pick up.
- Immediately report any unsafe conditions, defective tools or equipment, or other hazards to the Director. This includes unsafe conditions anywhere in the Center, the playground, or parking lot/grounds area. Each staff member is expected to assist the Center in maintaining safe conditions.

Sleeping or Inattention

- To protect the safety of all staff members and children, all staff members must be fully alert and engaged while on the job.
- The Center expects staff members to be focused on working, working safely, appearing professional at all work times, and being as productive as possible.
- The Little Vikings Learning Center will not tolerate sleeping or inattention on the job. This includes use of personal electronic devices for personal use when supervising children.

Smoking

- It is unlawful to smoke or use tobacco on the premises.
- If a staff member does smoke, he or she must be off the premises. While off premises, the staff member must clock out.
- If a staff member smokes before work or during breaks, he or she must thoroughly wash his/her hands when returning to work and shall not smell of smoke.

Visitors

- Staff members are not allowed to have personal visitors while on duty. If it is necessary to have a visitor, notify the Director immediately.

Written Communication with Parents/Guardians

- The Little Vikings Learning Center recognizes the importance of regular and accurate communication with parents/guardians and has developed various materials and procedures for doing so.

- If a staff member deems it necessary to provide any information to parents/guardians in written form, the Director must approve it before being given to the parents/guardians.

Little Vikings Procedures

Animals

- Animals shall only be allowed if approved in advance by the Little Vikings Learning Center Director.
- Parents/guardians shall be notified in writing when animals are or will be present. If a child has a particular allergy to an animal, parents shall provide documentation of this information, in writing, to the Little Vikings Learning Center staff.
- Only animals that are known to be safe and free of disease are allowed on school premises. Per Texas DFPS regulations, children must not have contact with chickens, ducks, and reptiles, such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads.

Arrival

- Parents should always carry or hold a child's hand while in the parking lot. All student parents and their children must enter the Little Vikings Learning Center immediately upon arriving to campus. Taking children on the main campus is not allowed without prior approval of the campus principal.
- Parents must bring their child(ren) all the way into the room and to make sure that the teacher "checks the child in".
- Individualized separation routines can be discussed with parents, as needed.
- Each child shall have an informal health check done at the beginning of the day.

Breast-Feeding Accommodations

- Mothers have the right to breastfeed and/or to provide breast milk for their child. Any mother who is nursing may utilize the Center's lactation space with a rocking chair to breastfeed her baby during the day.

Celebrations and Holidays

- We are excited to share special events and celebrations with our children, such as a birthday for a child or staff members. The Little Vikings Learning Center Director should be consulted prior to providing a special treat/snack and all food items must be store bought.
- For the protection of children with food allergies, food that is brought into the program must be commercially prepared with a list of ingredients printed.

Clothing

- Parents must provide an extra change of clothing with each item labeled. Staff members are to ensure that no children are admitted without a spare change of clothes. This is particularly important for those children who are in diapers or are toilet training, but is also required for all children in case of accidental food, water, or messy play.

- If a child has a toileting accident, soiled clothes shall not be rinsed out due to sanitary issues; any solids shall be disposed of. Staff members shall place the soiled clothing in a bag to go home with parents for laundering.
- Parents are responsible for dressing their child in weather- and activity-appropriate attire.
- Children shall be brought in shoes that are appropriate for running and climbing. Staff members shall advise parents not to bring children in cowboy boots, flimsy sandals, or flip-flops as they are unsafe on the playground.
- Jewelry is not permitted, with the exception of small stud earrings that cannot catch on clothing and playground equipment.
- If any of these policies conflict with the cultural practices of parents, please direct them to discuss this with the Little Vikings Learning Center Director.
- Staff members experiencing repeated concerns related to clothing shall discuss these concerns with the Little Vikings Learning Center Director.

Communication

- Staff members are encouraged to discuss a child's activities with his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) at the time of pick up or they may schedule a conference.
- Regular communication of activities and happenings should be provided to parents.

Concerns

- Parent concerns should be addressed to the Little Vikings Learning Center Director. If parents feel that their concerns are not properly addressed, they may then ask the director to set up an appointment with the Lago Vista ISD Superintendent.

Curriculum & Instruction

- Based on observations and children's interests and passions, caregivers shall develop lesson plans, which include activities designed to facilitate individual children's growth and development.
- **Learning Centers:** These provide a variety of activities such as: books, blocks, art, math, language, puzzles, science, manipulative materials, computers, and dramatic play. Children are provided with practice in making decisions, following directions, working independently, and learning the care and use of materials. They also have the opportunity to work and play in these centers by choice, and may use them individually, with a friend, or in small groups. Teachers will purposefully interact with children within the centers to help them achieve their learning goals.
- **Daily Group Activities:** These provide the opportunity for your child to learn in a large group setting. Group lessons include stories, music, gross motor activities, language experiences, and discussion of the current unit of study.
- **Outdoor Play:** This is also an important part of the curriculum and is essential to children's health. Children must come to school healthy enough to be able to participate in outside play. We are unable to provide separate supervision arrangements for children who are unable to play outside due to temperature, wind, etc. Outdoor play occurs for a minimum of 30 minutes a day, weather permitting. Temperature conditions are considered good weather if it is above 50 degrees and below 100 degrees. We do not take children out when it is raining or an advisory has been given by the State Health Department.

- **Sensory Play, or “Messy Play”:** This type of learning occurs through hands-on sensory activities that help develop children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skills. Sensory play also contributes in crucial ways to brain development. Think of it as “food for the brain”; stimulating the senses sends signals to children’s brains that help to strengthen neural pathways important for all types of learning.
- We encourage parents to ensure that children arrive in clothing that allows for both outdoor and messy play and that a change of clothing is provided.

Daily Activities

- Staff members shall ask parents of infants to provide information about sleeping and eating habits. Infants are to participate in stimulating activities throughout the day.
- Toddlers and preschoolers are to participate in various structured and unstructured activities throughout the day.
- In accordance with Texas DFPS regulations, using TV/video, computer, or video games are prohibited for children under the age of two years.

Field Trips

- The Little Vikings Learning Center does not provide transportation nor does it participate in field trips. Water activities will be limited to on site water tables and splash pools.

Food & Snacks

- The Little Vikings Learning Center believes that meals and snacks are critical to a child’s health and development. They are also an important part of the center’s curriculum. Every effort is made to ensure that mealtime is enjoyable for children.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for providing all lunch, snacks, and formula/breast milk. The Little Vikings Learning Center is not responsible for the nutritional value of lunches and snack provided or for meeting the child’s daily food needs. In accordance with Texas DFPS regulations, the Little Vikings Learning Center is prohibited from serving beverages with added sugars, such as carbonated beverages, fruit punch, or sweetened milk except for a special occasion such as a holiday or birthday celebration.
- Parents/guardians must provide a nutritious lunch and two (2) snacks from home each day. All food should be cut into bite-size pieces that are easy to swallow.
- Parents/guardians of infants must provide formula/breast milk and baby food each day.
- Parents/guardians must ensure that all lunch boxes, bags, bottles, and containers are labeled with the child’s full name.
- To meet food safety standards, insulated lunch boxes with ice packs or frozen juice boxes (which will be thawed in time to drink with lunch) are required for foods that must remain cooled.
- In accordance with Texas DFPS regulations, snacks and/or meals provided by a parent/guardian must not be shared with other children unless a parent is providing baked goods for a celebration or party being held at the center; and the Little Vikings Learning Center has ensured that the shared snacks meet the needs of children who require special diets.
- Mothers have the right to breastfeed and/or to provide breast milk for their child. **(See the Infant Feeding section.)**

- We do not practice baby-led weaning method due to potential choking.

Holidays

- The Little Vikings Learning Center follows the yearly Lago Vista ISD academic calendar. A copy of the annual academic calendar may be access on the Lago Vista ISD website at www.lagovistaisd.net.

Inclement Weather

- If Lago Vista ISD cancels school due to inclement weather conditions, the Little Vikings Learning Center will also be closed. If Lago Vista ISD operates on a one- or two-hour late start due to inclement weather conditions, the Little Vikings Learning Center will also operate on a one- or two-hour late start. Credit will not be offered for these days.

Infant Feeding

- Infants' digestion benefits from consistency between home to Little Vikings, so infant feeding requires special instructions. For an infant who is not yet ready for table food, the Little Vikings Learning Center must obtain and follow written feeding instructions that are signed and dated by the infant's parent or health-care professional. **(See the Infant Feeding Plan at the back of this handbook.)**
- Parents must provide all infant bottles (with lids), bottle contents, and baby food, including regular snacks and meals for infants who eat table food.
- Our program supports breastfeeding by accepting, storing, and serving expressed milk for feedings. Any mother who is nursing may utilize the Center's lactation space with a rocking chair to breastfeed her baby during the day.
- The following guidelines apply to bottle-feeding:
 - All bottles and training cups must be labeled by the parent/guardian with a permanent marker and the infant's first name and initial of last name. All bottles must have covers. They must be relabeled by the parent/guardian when the name wears off.
 - It is strongly recommended that parents/guardians provide premade bottles. Premade bottles must be labeled as formula or breast milk. *Note: Formula or breast milk will be the only milk product served to children younger than 12 months of age unless medically indicated by the child's health care giver.* If the bottle contains formula, then the label should include the date the bottle was prepared; if the bottle contains breast milk, then the label should include the date the milk was expressed.
 - Expressed breast milk may be brought from home in bottles or breast milk bags. Breast milk will be refrigerated or frozen as soon as it arrives. Refrigerated breast milk must be used within 48 hours. Breast milk first frozen then thawed in the refrigerator must be used within 24 hours of thawing.
 - If bottles are not premade, caregivers will prepare them while the child is in care.
 - If the caregiver is asked to prepare breast milk bottles, the parent/guardian must provide a sufficient amount of bagged breast milk and the number of bottles the child needs for a day.

- If the caregiver is asked to prepare bottles with formula, then the parent/guardian must provide unmixed formula in a factory sealed container, the number of bottles the child needs for a day, and any bottled water (sterilized or fortified) required to mix the formula. If bottled water is not provided, the caregiver will use tap water. Manufacturer's instructions will be followed when mixing formula.
- For safety reasons, bottles may not contain anything other than breast milk or mixed formula. No medicine, vitamins, or cereal may be mixed in a bottle unless medically indicated by the child's health care provider.
- Both prepared and provided bottles must be cleaned and sanitized by the parent/guardian before being filled. Bottles with a strong "sour" odor indicate bacteria are present and the bottle(s) will not be given to the child. If there are no other bottles available, parents/guardians will be contacted to either pick up child or provide a clean bottle(s).
- Frozen breast milk will be thawed under cold water or in refrigerator.
- Before feeding, bottles will be placed under warm, running tap water or in a container of water no warmer than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature will be tested before giving the bottle to an infant.
- Infants will be held or fed sitting up. Bottle propping, feeding in cribs, car seats, or swings, or carrying of bottles by children will not be permitted.
- Infants may not walk around with or sleep with a bottle or training cup.
- Any contents remaining in a bottle after feeding will be discarded. If the feeding has taken over 1 hour to complete or the bottle has been un-refrigerated for 1 hour, the milk shall be discarded.
- Once used, bottles will not be refilled at the Little Vikings Learning Center, so the parent/guardian must provide the number of bottles needed for the day. Bottles will be rinsed after use throughout the day and provided at pick up.

Infant Sleeping

- To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), staff members shall put infants to sleep on their backs, unless the infant's physician has provided the Center with a written statement authorizing another sleep position for that particular infant.
- Infants shall be placed for sleeping only on firm, tight-fitting mattresses in a crib. Staff members must not place or allow a parent/guardian to place any pillows, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other soft items in the crib.
- When an infant can easily turn over onto his or her stomach, staff members must continue to put the infant to sleep initially on his or her back, but allow the infant to roll over onto his or her stomach as the infant prefers. Under no circumstances shall a staff member place positioning devices that restrict an infant's movement in the crib, unless the infant's physician has provided a written statement authorizing the use of such device for that particular infant.
- If a staff member is approached by a parent and instructed to use such device without a physician's authorization, the staff member must immediately contact the Center Director.

Insect Repellant

- For parents/guardians who wish to protect their child with insect repellant, we encourage them to spray their child with bug spray prior to coming to school. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, insect repellants should not be applied to children under 2 months of age.
- If they wish, parents may also provide one bottle of child safe insect repellant labeled with the child's name. The Little Vikings Learning Center staff will individually tend to each child's specific needs on these matters and will follow all product directions and precautions.
- If a child is sensitive or allergic to these types of prevention, parents must notify Little Vikings Learning Center staff in writing.

Non-Discrimination Statement

- The Little Vikings Learning Center provides care to children between the ages of infancy and 5 years without regard to race, religion, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, parent/guardian marital status, parent/guardian political beliefs, parent/guardian sexual orientation, disability or special needs, medical condition, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

Personal Belongings

- Each child is allowed to bring ONE non-screen toy to the class as long as he/she shares it and as long as the parent/guardian fully understands that the Little Vikings Learning Center is not responsible for the toy if lost or broken. Parents/guardians may consider sending a stuffed animal or doll, which may ease the transition from home and comfort the anxious child. A book to share with the whole class is also always welcome.
- We encourage children to leave personal toys and games at home. This policy prevents hurt feelings and lost or broken belongings. We provide plenty of toys, games, activities.
- Toy guns, knives, sword and any toys that promote violence are not permitted.

Photographs

- The Little Vikings Learning Center may occasionally take photographs of children as part of the Center's daily curriculum, documentation activities, and other business purposes. If parents prefer that their child's image not be shared outside of the Center, please let us know in writing.

Records

- Parents have the right to access their own child's record during a parent conference with the caregiver or child-care center director.
- All children's records are subject to review and/or reproduction by licensing authority upon request during hours of operation.

Release of Children

- Children will be released only to parents or to a person designated on enrollment paperwork with proper identification.
- Families should advise center administration in advance, in writing, if an alternate or a person not listed on the original form is to pick up their child.

- For the safety of each child, photographic identification will be requested of all authorized persons picking up children.
- The Little Vikings Learning Center is required by law to have a tracking system for the release of children, which must include the name of each child; the date, time of arrival, and time of departure; and the employee or parent's initials.

Siblings

- Siblings enrolled in Lago Vista Elementary School are not allowed to be a part of the program. Due to liability, siblings may not enter the classroom without an adult before 4:30pm (in-service and teacher workdays included).

Sleep/Rest Periods

- Infants rest according to their individual schedules. The Little Vikings Learning Center follows the DFPS Operational Policy on Infant Safe Sleep, which may be referenced at the end of this handbook.
- All other children have a scheduled rest period each day, during which they may sleep or engage in a quiet activity. The Center asks parents of children 12 months and older to supply a small blanket, which parents should take home to launder weekly. Children may also bring a small pillow and a stuffed toy or security object, if they wish. All items must be labeled with the child's name.

Sunscreen

- We strongly encourages the use of sunscreen every time we go outside and encourages parents to apply sunscreen to their child prior to coming to school.
- Parents are asked to provide one bottle of sunscreen each year labeled with the child's name. The Little Vikings Learning Center staff will individually tend to each child's specific needs on these matters and will follow all product directions and precautions.
- If a child is sensitive or allergic to these types of prevention, parents must notify Little Vikings Learning Center staff in writing.

Termination of Enrollment

- The Little Vikings Learning Center makes every effort to meet the needs of the families it serves. Occasionally, there are times it is determined that our program is not a good fit for a family and a child's enrollment is terminated. Examples of reasons to terminate include non-payment of tuition, repeated instances of late tuition payment, repeated instances of late pick ups a child past closing, severe behavior issues by children or their parents, etc.

Toilet Learning

- Toilet learning is often an emotionally charged experience for all concerned, including the children, the parent, and the teacher. In the toddler classroom, children will become more aware of toilet learning and it is at this time the parent may discuss developing a plan with the teacher. All children in the Pre-K class should be working towards independent toileting, unless there are specialized needs.
- In order to make the toilet training process as smooth and effective as possible, these policy guidelines are followed by the Little Vikings Learning Center:

- 1) The teacher and parent shall discuss and develop a toileting plan. This means the child may not be sent to the Little Vikings Learning Center in underwear prior to discussing and developing a plan with the teacher.
- 2) Diaper free awake periods should start at home for at least 1 week (during breaks, such as summer, winter, or spring) prior to beginning diaper-free awake periods at school. Diapers may be used during nap or sleep time, and this will likely be only for a short term.
- 3) Once toilet training has started, parents/guardians must provide ample dry clothing on a regular basis.
- 4) If a child has a toileting accident, soiled clothes will not be rinsed out due to sanitary issues; any solids will be disposed of. The soiled clothing will be put in a bag to go home for laundering.
- 5) Children must wash their hands after toileting and appropriate supervision will be provided to ensure that children follow good practices.

Visitation

- Parents are encouraged to visit the center at any time. If a parent wishes to observe a particular activity, it is helpful to schedule this ahead of time, but not required.
- Parents are welcome to participate in any daycare activities so long as it does not conflict with their duties as a school employee. Employees are not to visit the daycare during time when they are scheduled to be performing job duties.
- If a parent/guardian repeatedly remains during drop off, pickup, or midday visits longer than 10 minutes in duration, they will be asked to follow the same guidelines as other volunteers at our center. This involves completing a volunteer application and a criminal history background check.

Health and Well-Being

Allergies

- If a child's physician has identified an allergy, an Allergy Emergency Plan must be completed by the child's physician and kept on file prior to enrollment. All staff are trained annually (or upon admission) on any specific child allergies and any child's Allergy Management Plan.
- Any allergy management/response medications prescribed by the child's health care provider must be provided by the parent/guardian.
- The Lago Vista Elementary School nurse and District RN will be consulted if assistance is needed to assess individual reactions.
 - **Food Allergies:** Per DFPS regulation §746.3819, the Little Vikings Learning Center must have a food allergy emergency plan for each child with a known food allergy that has been diagnosed by a health-care professional.
 - A food allergy emergency plan is an individualized plan prepared by the child's health care professional that includes:
 - 1) a list of each food the child is allergic to;
 - 2) possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list; and
 - 3) the steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction.
 - The child's health care professional and parent must sign and date the plan.
 - **Insect Allergies:** Little Vikings staff members take normal precautions to prevent through environmental controls, such as limiting freestanding water. In the event a child does sustain an insect bite, basic first aid is provided. In the event a child has a known reaction, his/her individual Allergy Management Plan will be followed. If the allergy needs of a child extend beyond the routine services, the parent/guardian must provide the needed items (e.g., wipes, lotions, medications, etc.).
 - **Topical or Environmental Allergies:** All topical or environmental allergies will be accommodated as reasonably as possible. In the event a child has a known reaction, his/her individual Allergy Management Plan will be followed. If the allergy needs of a child extend beyond the routine services, the family will provide the needed items (ie: wipes, lotions, medications, etc.).
 - **Severe or Life-Threatening Allergies:** With written parent/guardian permission, parents of other students in the classroom will receive a letter notifying them that a student with a life threatening food allergy is in the classroom and that they should refrain from sending children to school with food/substances that are known allergens.

Child Health – Illness and Exclusion Criteria

- A well check will be conducted daily upon arrival documenting any signs of illness or injury. Parents will be contacted if the teacher has any questions or concerns.
- Per Texas DFPS regulations, an ill child may not attend the Little Vikings Learning Center if one or more of the following exists:
 - 1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play;

- 2) 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;
 - 3) The child has one of the following (unless a medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care center's activities):
 - a) An oral temperature above 101 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
 - b) A tympanic (ear) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Tympanic thermometers are not recommended for children under six months old;
 - c) An axillary (armpit) temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or
 - d) Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill; or
 - 4) A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious. If a child has a communicable illness (i.e. pink eye, hepatitis, any known contagious infection for which medical attention is required) that child will not be allowed to return to the daycare without a doctor's note indicating it is safe for the child to be around other young children/infants.
- Any child with 2 or more runny stools in one day will be sent home from the daycare.
 - Any child with one vomiting episode in a 24-hour period will not be allowed in the daycare.
 - The Little Vikings Learning Center Director has the discretion to ask for a doctor's release if the child has an illness that could be communicated to others in the daycare.

Child Health – Illness During the Day

- If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will:
 - 1) Contact the parent to pick up the child;
 - 2) Care for the child apart from other children;
 - 3) Give appropriate attention and supervision until the parent picks the child up; and
 - 4) Give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation if the child has diarrhea or vomiting.

Child Health – Illness & Returning to the Center

- A child who was ill may return to the Little Vikings Learning Center when:
 - 1) The child is free of symptoms of illness for 24 hours; or
 - 2) If the illness required medical attention, the parent/guardian has obtained a health care professional's statement that the child no longer has an excludable disease or condition.

Dispensing Medications

- In order for Little Vikings Learning Center staff to administer ANY medication, prescription or over the counter medication, we must have a signed Authorization for Dispensing Medication form from the parent/guardian and a written order from the child's physician.
- All prescription and non-prescription medications are kept in a designated area. All medication must be signed in. All prescriptions must be in the original container labeled with your child's name, date, directions, and the physician's name. Non-prescription medications must be in the original container, labeled with your child's name and the date the medication was brought in.
- No medicine, vitamins, or cereal may be mixed in a bottle unless medically indicated by the child's health care provider.
- Medicine that has expired will not be given to a child. All medication must be removed from your child's backpack and lunch box.

Medical Emergencies

- A school nurse is employed at Lago Vista Elementary School. In the event of an emergency, the nurse would be called. Staff will also immediately contact 911 and then the child's parents.
- Daycare staff members are required to be licensed in first aid and CPR.

Reportable Communicable Diseases

- When the Little Vikings Learning Center is notified that a child enrolled in our center or an employee has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the appropriate agencies. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventive measures. The Little Vikings Learning Center will follow all recommendations made by these entities in order to promote the health and safety of staff members and the children and families we serve. We believe it is extremely important to notify families about exposure so their children can receive preventive treatment if available.
- Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:
 - Bacterial meningitis
 - Chicken pox
 - Diarrhea (for certain conditions)
 - Hepatitis
 - Measles (including suspected)
 - Meningococcal infection (invasive)
 - Mumps
 - Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
 - Rubella (German Measles)
 - Tuberculosis
 - Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Please refer to <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions/> for a complete listing.

Abuse and Neglect Prevention/Response

- Our center practices selective hiring, adheres to supervisory guidelines, and provides annual training to all employees.
- Little Vikings Learning Center employees receive annual training on preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. Texas law states that anyone who suspects a child is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) at 1-800-252-5400.
- Little Vikings Learning Center staff are REQUIRED by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services involved will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It is the agency's role to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. The Little Vikings Learning Center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Our foremost concern is always the protection of the child.

Emergency Preparedness

- If an incident occurs while daycare is in session that requires evacuation to an off-site location, the daycare will first shelter-in-place and wait for instructions to evacuate. All notifications will be made via intercom announcement, telephone, or cell phones. Each teacher must take their class rosters, cell phones, and emergency bag with them. At the direction of the principal, assistant principal, or emergency management officials, an off-site evacuation will be conducted. Daycare will exit to the morning bus drop-off circle using the back doors (by the special education office). A bus will be waiting to transport students and teachers to the planned evacuation site. The default evacuation location is Lago Vista High School where students would be released to parents.
- In the event of an intruder on campus, a lock down will be ordered. Doors to classrooms are already locked. Blinds will be closed and children will be kept below sight of windows. Once lockdown is in place, doors will not be opened to admit anyone other than an administrator or member of office staff, or a police officer showing proper identification.
- In the event of a high level terrorist threat or inclement weather, the daycare will be relocated to the music room. (Room 325)

Discipline and Guidance

Discipline and Guidance Practices

- Good behavior will be promoted through encouragement and modeling good examples.
- We will never use physical punishment to discipline a child. Alternative measures such as redirection or restricting the child from certain activities in which misbehavior has occurred is our first alternative. "Down Time" may be used to let the child think about his/her actions and the effect on others if not corrected.
- If, after discussion and coaching the child is still not able to maintain appropriate behavior, the parent will be called. It is very important that the parents share with the director any unusual events that may be affecting the child and may be causing behavioral changes.
- Toy guns, knives, sword and any toy that promotes violence are not permitted.
- Children are expected to behave and respect their surroundings, their peers, their teachers and mostly themselves. If for any reason the teacher believes that the child is a threat to any of the above, the parents will be called for a consultation over the phone. If the child continues to behave inappropriately, then the parents will be called to come to the center to handle the situation.

Biting

- Biting is a behavior that is within developmental norms for a child who has not yet developed expressive language. Toddlers have feelings that they cannot always express in words, and impulsive biting is quite often a replacement. Parents must also understand that some children do not adapt well to a highly stimulating environment and this may result in a biting incident. Biting may also be an indication of teething or the onset of illness. Most children outgrow this behavior as they develop these expressive language skills.
- Should a biting incident occur, please be assured that the following appropriate measures will be taken:
 - 1) The child who has been bitten will be given the most attention. Hugs and love will be used while the bitten area is cleansed and ice applied.
 - 2) The biter will be gently, but firmly, grasped by the shoulders, and the teacher, at eye level, will firmly say "No bite" (to toddlers), or "Biting hurts our friends. No biting" (to two-year olds and older). Then the child will be redirected to another activity, which may include age appropriate time out.
 - 3) The teacher gives to the parents of the injured child and biter a written report (no names are mentioned). A copy is also be kept for our records.
 - 4) If a child is continually having a problem controlling their urge to bite, the Little Vikings Learning Center Director will make every effort to work with the parents and teachers. A staff member may observe the child in the classroom to give all parties additional directions.

Discipline & Termination of Enrollment

- When a child persists in inappropriate behavior that is excessive and beyond age expected behavior, the classroom teacher will monitor the child's classroom interactions and document problematic behavior. Parents will receive written documentation to include the action taken by the teacher/director to discontinue the behavior. If the child's negative behavior continues to escalate, a meeting the lead teacher, and parent will take place in an effort to explore options to deal with the behavior.
- If parents are uncooperative or appear inconsistent and the behavior of the child continues or escalates, a meeting with the parents, lead teacher, and a member of the administrative team will occur.
- The Little Vikings Learning Center staff members work very hard to make the program work for every child and take extraordinary measures to help children overcome challenging behaviors. However, if the behavior of the child is so severe that the child is creating a major disturbance in the classroom, creating an unsafe atmosphere where the child or other children could be harmed, or hitting, kicking, biting or harming assigned teachers in any way, the Little Vikings Learning Center reserves the right to remove a child from attendance for a period of time or to dismiss a child from the program.

Licensing and Contact Information

Minimum Standards and Licensing

- The Little Vikings Learning Center is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). A full-text copy of the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Centers is available for review at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>.
- A copy of the daycare minimum standards and most recent licensing inspection report are also available upon request in the daycare. A parent or legal guardian with a child enrolled in Little Vikings has the right to review the minimum standards, licensing report, and all current inspections conducted by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services.
- If a parent or legal guardian wishes to review the standards or the licensing report, he/she may request this information from the Little Vikings Learning Center Director at any time.

Contacting the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

- The Little Vikings Daycare Center operates under the guidelines of the Texas Protective and Regulatory Services.
- Texas DFPS childcare licensing offices are open Monday through Friday. To contact the Central Texas - Austin office, see the information below:
14000 Summit Drive, Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78728
(512) 834-3426

Gang Free Zones

- Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone.
- For the purposes of the daycare, a gang-free zone includes a daycare vehicle and a location in, on, or within 1000 feet of any District-owned or leased property or campus playground.



**Lago Vista ISD
Little Vikings Learning Center
Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Form**

Employee Name: _____ Phone: _____

I have received a copy of the Little Vikings Learning Center Employee Handbook and have reviewed all the information contained therein.

I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced within the handbook.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in District policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this booklet.

As the District provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that this handbook intends no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor or department head of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Discipline and Guidance Policy for the Little Vikings Learning Center

Day care providers must have staff and parents read and sign a copy of this form to demonstrate compliance with regulations. A copy of the signed form will be kept in each child's record.

Discipline must be:

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance

My signature verifies I have read and received a copy of this discipline and guidance policy.

Signature

Date

Check one please:

Parent Employee/Caregiver

Texas DFPS Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones For Child Care Centers

The Texas Department of Family & Protective Services requires this document to be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child-care centers. Informational only.

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your child care operation or copies may be provided to parents.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your childcare center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or courthouse for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

What does this mean for my daycare center?

A childcare center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

When do daycare centers have to comply with the new requirements?

The law is already in effect, so providers should begin sharing information regarding gang-free zones immediately. Licensing staff will offer technical assistance to facilitate compliance until rules are proposed and adopted, which is estimated to occur in March 2010. In the meantime, providers should update their operational policies and procedures to include providing the information mandated by this law to the parents or guardians of the children in care. For further information please contact your licensing representative or your local licensing office.



Lago Vista Independent School District

Excellence in ALL We Do!

8039 Bar-K Ranch Road
P.O. Box 4929
Lago Vista, TX 78645

(512) 267-8300
www.lagovistaisd.net

It is the policy of Lago Vista Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in any programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. For information about your rights, or grievance procedures, contact Darren Webb, Superintendent, 8039 Bar-K Ranch Road, Lago Vista, TX 78645, 512-267-8300.

Es norma de Lago Vista Distrito Escolar Independiente de no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo o impedimento, en sus programas, servicios o actividades, tal como lo requieren el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, según enmienda; el Título IX de las Enmiendas en la Educación, de 1972, y la Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, según enmienda. Para información sobre sus derechos o procedimientos para quejas, comuníquese con Darren Webb, Superintendente, 8039 Bar-K Ranch Road, Lago Vista, TX 78645, 512-267-8300.