



# PARENT HANDBOOK

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The Serendipity School

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## I. Program Orientation

### a. Welcome message

We would like to welcome you to The Serendipity School. We hope that your relationship with our center will be a rewarding one. The articles in this handbook are presented in the interest of communication our policies and procedure to you. We are an extension of the home and do many parental responsibilities only as the child's teacher.

Please take a few minutes to read this parent handbook. It provides helpful information to better acquaint you with The Serendipity School and serves as the operational policies for our center. Please speak with the Director if you have any questions regarding this handbook.

Our friendly, knowledgeable and professional staff is always available to address your child care needs.

### b. Philosophy

The Serendipity School was established for the purpose of meeting a community's need for excellent childcare. We are an extension of the parents. Our purpose is to educate, train, provide learning experiences and help develop the total child in body, soul & spirit. We offer a healthy and safe environment where relationships and all attitudes are in the best interest of the children.

### c. Hours of Operation

The Serendipity School is open Monday Through Friday, 6:30m - 6:30pm. Except on scheduled holidays, January through December. Children must be present by 10am to be able to attend school for the day.

### d. Open Door Policy

Parents of enrolled children are welcome to visit our school at any time during regular operation hours for observation of child's classroom through the observation window. No appointment or prior notification necessary. Parents who wish to sit in on the classroom must schedule that time with the teacher and front office in advance, so as not to be a distraction during our learning time.

### e. Licensing

The Serendipity School adheres to the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers and is licensing by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

### f. Grouping

The Serendipity School Preschool program enrolls children from 6 weeks through 5 years of age. The Afterschool program provides care for children ages 5 to 12 years afterschool, on holidays and during the summer. Children are grouped according to chronological age and developmental level. The child-teacher ration varies according to age.

### g. Program & Curriculum Description

The Serendipity School is staffed by administration and teachers specially trained in early childhood education, earning a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education annually in early childhood development and special needs care. The staff not only bring their professional background and experiences to the program but also genuine concern for the children and families. The programs emphasize group interactions with teachers during play and explorations and during care giving routines, such as mealtimes and diapering/toileting. The daily program is structures but also flexible. It provides for a variety of experiences, levels of difficulty and

individual pacing. There is a balance of indoor/outdoor, quiet/active, individual/group, large muscle/fine motor and child initiated/staff initiated activities. Classrooms are set up into work areas for preschool age and activity zones for infants and toddlers.

The Serendipity School is pleased to provide our children with the Highscope Curriculum which provides a structured daily routine and is based on active learning in an environment that is truly unique. Lessons focus on children's interest with particular care taken to allow children to express themselves in a variety of creative and open ended ways. The familiarity of the daily routines allow children to feel comfortable in the learning environment while our well trained teachers work closely with parents and the director to ensure that each child builds a strong academic foundation and love of learning. Staff provide feedback to parents in the form of phone calls, daily communication sheets, monthly newsletters and our website.

#### **h. Discipline and Guidance Plan**

We believe in a positive approach to discipline. Teaching children what to do more often than what not to do develops problem solving skills and a generous and kind attitude while guiding them toward acceptable behavior and self-discipline. Parents can show support by teaching their children to value and respect teachers and friends.

Our trained and caring staff implement positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; using brief supervised separation or breaks 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. At The Serendipity School, we believe that discipline should be individualized and consistent for each child and appropriate to the child's level of understanding. Corporal punishment, embarrassment and shaming will never be used.

Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. Consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues

The Serendipity School reserves the right to suspend and/or terminate care for any child due to discipline problems at any time, or whose behavior poses a significant risk to the safety and well-being of other children and/or staff. No reduction or refund in tuition fees will be given in these situations.

#### **i. Registration and Enrollment Process**

The Serendipity School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, ability or sex.

Registration:

Registration fees are due at the time of registration and are non-refundable. Parents should notify the Director of any special circumstances or special needs in writing with their registration materials.

Enrollment:

Enrollment officially occurs when registration fees are paid and completed Enrollment Packet is on file in the office.

Upon enrollment, each family will receive a Serendipity School Parent Handbook. Parents must sign a form stating that they have read the handbook and agree to abide by the policies set forth. This form must be returned on or before the child's first day to be kept on file at The Serendipity School's office. Each child must also have the following completed and signed forms:

1. Enrollment form with Emergency Authorization
2. Medical Examination Form (Completed by child's Doctor)
3. Child Information Sheet

4. Current immunization records
  5. Vision & Hearing test results (for preschool children 4 years of age and older)

The enrollment form, health requirements and child information sheets must be updated annually. Parents should provide The Serendipity School office with any changes to the enrollment form, emergency authorization, medical examination and child information sheet, as well as updates of any immunizations that occur throughout the year.

All children four years of age are required by the State Health Department to have a hearing and vision screening by a licensed physician, qualified professional, or certified screening technician. The screening should be completed within 30 days of the child turning 4 and a copy of the results must be turned into The Serendipity School's office to be kept on file with the child's records.

## II. Program Policies

### a. Absences

Parents should notify the office by 9:00am if their child will not be in attendance to help us account for each child. Additionally, please inform the office if your child is absent due to an illness so staff can be notified of the situation.

### b. Accidents/Emergencies

Accidents/First Aid: The staff maintains current certifications in First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). The teachers will follow basic first aid procedures for injuries and notify parents of any accidents requiring first aid at our center through a written accident report.

Parents must have signed a "medical consent" statement allowing the school to authorized medical treatment in the case of an emergency and when parents cannot be reached. If your child should require any medical attention of any emergency nature, The Serendipity School will contact 911, if needed, and you or your designated emergency contact person will be notified as soon as the situation allows. If the parents or the persons designated on the emergency form cannot be reached, the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility.

Emergency Evacuation: The Serendipity School conducts monthly fire drills and severe weather drill four times a year with the children.

A copy of our Emergency Preparedness Plan is available for your review in our front office.

### c. Address, Telephone or Work Changes

Any changes in address, telephone number or work location should be reported promptly in writing to The Serendipity School office. Telephone numbers and emergency contacts and individuals authorized to pick up the child should also be kept current.

### d. Arrival and Departure Procedures

Parents must sign their child/children in and out at the computer kiosk located in the front office. Staff will also sign children in and out on daily attendance rosters kept by each classroom teacher. Parents must make sure that staff member is aware of their child's arrival and departure.

Parents and children are to enter and leave The Serendipity School by the front door only. We also request that parents maintain stringent supervision of their children in and around the parking lot, outdoor playgrounds and front lobby area.

Children will only be released to those authorized by the guardian/parent to pick up. Authorization is either by including them on your "authorization to pick up" form or by calling the front office with the request and providing information to verify the caller's identity. ID or Driver's License will be checked when unfamiliar adults pick up children.

The Serendipity School will not release children to older siblings under the age of 17.

**Children are not allowed to touch the keypad to exit the building.**

#### e. **Calendar**

Our center will be closed on the following days for our staff to observe the holidays with their families.

- Labor day
- Memorial day
- Thanksgiving day (and the Friday after)
- Christmas Eve (office will post)
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve (office will post)
- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Battle of Flowers
- Fourth of July

If the holidays should fall on a Saturday or Sunday, it is up to the center's discretion if they will be closed the Friday before or the Monday after the holiday.

Tuition will not be prorated or refunded for holidays & part-time children will not get to make up their days if it falls on a holiday

#### f. **Cellphones**

Parents should refrain from using cell phones while at The Serendipity School. Additionally, children found using a cellphone or tablet will be asked to turn it into the office until time for pick up.

#### g. **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Parents are encourage to discuss child abuse and neglect with The Serendipity School's Director and/or their child's teacher. It is important for even suspected abuse or neglect to be reported so those specialist can intervene before more harm is done. Please see the front office for additional information on Child Abuse and Neglect.

#### h. **Clothing and Supplies**

Clothing:

Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable clothing that they can easily manipulate for toileting since we encourage children to do things for themselves. No dress or attire that requires

the child or teacher to take off the child's complete clothing to use the restrooms. No body suits with napped crotch should be worn by children 18 months and over.

Please keep in mind when dressing your child: rubber soled shoes are vest for active young children on the playground. Boots and flip-flops can be hazardous and are highly discouraged. Shoes are required for all children on the outdoor playground, including those not yet walking.

Each child must bring a bag wit his/her name clearly marked on the front or inside. Two COMPLETE changes of clothing, a pair of socks and shoes must be kept n the bag at all times for all groups. All articles of removable clothing (jackets, sweaters, hats, etc.) should be clearly labeled with the child's name. children who are in the toilet training process must have several changes of clothing on hand every day.

#### Diapering:

Parents with children who wear diapers must ring an ample supply of disposable diapers for each day (usually 6-10 depending on the hours of care). Parents must also supply wipes and diaper ointment, lotion, cream or powder. Parents may bring diapers and wipes in bulk.

#### Supplies:

Infant room- 6weeks to 12 months- items must be provided:

- Formula or breast milk (Serendipity provides Enfamil formula)
- Bottles (must be labeled with child's name and last initial)
- Diapers & wipes
- Diaper rash cream or powder
- Extra clothes
- Pacifier
- **Blankets are prohibited in our center for children under 1 year of age**

Young & Old Toddlers- 12-23 months- items must be provided:

- Breakfast, Lunch and snack for the infants that are able to eat table foods will be provided.
- Sippy cups (3 cups total, we require a clean cup for each meal)
- Diapers and/or pullups & wipes
- Extra clothes
- Shoes
- Small blanket and pillow

Pk2- 2 years of age- Items that must be provided

- Diapers and/or pullups and wipes
- One sippy cup (they will transition to an open mouth cup)
- Several changes of clothes and extra shoes
- Blanket for nap

3 years of age through Pre-kindergarten- items that must be provided

- Pullups & wipes, if needed
- Several changes of clothes (including shoes)
- Small blanket and pillow

#### i. Field trips

A notice will be posted at least 48 hours before a field trip is scheduled to take place. Provided written permission must be on file in order to participate. Children will be transported to and from field trips in The Serendipity School buses. The Director may find it necessary to cancel a trip at any time due to situations including but not limited to, last minute changes and/or weather concerns.

## j. Fundraising

Tuition and fees are primarily used to run the day-to-day program at The Serendipity School. They pay for staff salaries, supplies, food, etc. fundraisers are held to generate extra funds to purchase special items or complete special projects. Parent's support is necessary to make these successful and to help provide the children with new equipment and continually improve the environment.

## k. Health Policy/Illness

The health policies at The Serendipity School are in accordance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standard Guidelines. A child who has a temperature of **101** or higher and/or is otherwise ill or generally not feeling well should be kept home until he/she has been free of fever without fever-reducing medication or other symptoms for 24 hours. The parent or other emergency contact will be notified so the child can be taken home if:

1. Becomes ill with a temperature of **101 or higher**
2. Diarrhea- more than two in a two hour period and/or is not able to be contained in a diaper or underwear
3. Vomiting two or more times within 24 hours
4. Open, running or spreading sores or rashes
5. Obvious symptoms of a communicable disease after known exposure
6. Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities including outdoor play

If a child is sent home with any of the above symptoms they may not return to our center until the child is free of symptoms of illness for 24 hours; or you have obtained a doctor's note indicating the child no longer has the condition/illness.

A child with outward symptoms may also be sent home if it is determined that the child is clearly not feeling well (lethargic, severe pain, etc.). parents of children with chronic symptoms of cold or allergies, including significant mucous, may be asked to have their child checked by a physician to rule out any infection.

Parents will be notified if their child has been exposed to a contagious disease. Likewise, parents should notify our center if their child has been exposed to or has a contagious disease such as pink eye (conjunctivitis), pin worms, head lice, ring worm, scabies, chicken pox, etc. parents must bring a doctor's note stating that the child has been treated and is no longer contagious.

If a child is not well enough to play outdoors, he/she should be kept at home. Outdoor play is an integral part of the day's program. The children will go outdoors daily, even for a few minutes for fresh air, in cooler or extremely hot temperatures, unless it is raining. Please take the weather into account when dressing your child.

***Children sent home sick must be picked up within ONE HOUR of the phone call to parents or there will be a fee assessed***

The Serendipity School staff will conduct a daily health and wellness check on your child upon arrival and throughout the day.

## l. Immunization Records/Medical Records

Each child enrolled in the program must have immunizations according to the immunization schedule of the Health Department and Minimum Standards. The dates for the required immunizations must be documented on the child's medical record in the office.



Within a week of enrollment, a statement signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine, shall certify that the physician has currently examined the child and that he child is physically able to participate in The Serendipity School's programs and activities. Tuberculosis testing is required ONLY if the Health Department puts out a notice stating that it is necessary due to an outbreak or concern in our local area. Parents will be notified in writing if this becomes necessary.

If your child's immunization records are not kept current, he/she may be required to remain out of care until we receive documentation from a licensed physician stating all immunizations are to date.

The Serendipity School's staff is encouraged to receive vaccines for Vaccine Preventable Diseases; however, vaccines are not required for our staff.

#### **m. Infant Safe Sleep Procedures**

The Serendipity School will follow the following safe-sleep procedures in our infant room:

- Each child will be assigned their own individual safety-approved crib with a firm mattress. Toys, blankets, pillows or bedding are not allowed in a crib being used by a child with the exception of fitted sheets. Our fitted sheets are washed on a daily basis; however families are always welcome to provide their own. Pacifiers with attached items such as stuffed animals are also not allowed.
- All infants are placed in a face-up sleeping position. An Infant Sleep Exception, Form 2710, may be completed by a health care professional stating that a different sleeping position is medically necessary for your child.
- Infants may not sleep in restrictive devices. If some infant falls asleep in a restrictive device, the infant will be removed from the device and placed in a crib as soon as possible.
- Swaddling of an infant is not allowed in our infant room.

#### **n. Medication policy**

We will dispense medications that are brought in by a parent each day at 11:00am and/or 3:00pm. The following procedures will be strictly adhered to based on the Minimum Standards:

- Prescription medications will be administered only when it is in the original container labeled with the child's name, date, directions and physician's name. the medication will be administered only as stated on the labeled directions and only with written permission from parent on a signed medication authorization form (obtained from the office). Medication must be signed in and can be given at 11am or 3pm (unless it's a breathing treatment or inhaler than we need a daily sheet filled out and an asthma action plan on file)
- Nonprescription (over the counter) medication will be administered only if we have a signed note from a physician with specific dosing instructions and a medication authorization form signed by a parent.

The center will not dispense medicine after the expiration date. All medication given will be documented and records kept on file for three months.

Medication needs to be brought to our center in a zip lock bag with your child's name on it and signed into the front office. The staff will document each dosage/time for the medication administered. It is the parent's responsibility to retrieve medication at the end of the day. PLEASE DO NOT PLACE ANY EDICATION IN THE CHILD'S BACKPACK/DIAPER BAG.

#### **o. Non-Hiring of The Serendipity School Staff**

In order to maintain our center's confidentiality and professionalism, persons employed as Staff at or by The Serendipity School are **prohibited** from contracting, soliciting for employment or engagement in temporary employment as a caregiver or babysitter for any parent/guardian who has a child enrolled at The Serendipity School.

**p. Nutrition Policy/Snacks/Lunches**

The Serendipity School will provide children who arrive no later than 8:25am with breakfast. All others will be provided with a hot lunch and afternoon snacks at the scheduled times. School age children will be provided with supper and a PM snack during the school year, and will follow the same feeding schedule as preschool children during the summer months or at which times they attend during the day.

The menu is posted in the office and outside of each classroom. We are a part of the Federal Food Program and as such are monitored and audited periodically to ensure compliance. We do not make meal exceptions unless a doctor's note is provided and kept on file. Milk substitutions also require a doctor's note.

You may supplement our provided meal with your own as long as it is packaged in a disposable container clearly marked with your child's name. Should you choose to replace your child's meals/snacks, The Serendipity School is not responsible for its nutritional value or meeting your child's daily food needs.

\*Please note that our kitchen staff will **NOT** heat food containers brought from home\*

Occasionally, parents may talk with the classroom teachers to request bringing a snack for a special event, birthday celebration or cooking project. The Serendipity School can only accept unopened, pre-packaged items or foods prepared from a grocery store bakery deli or restaurant.

Once a year, during our thanksgiving feast we may accept home cooked meals.

WE ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT ANY HOMEMADE FOOD OR PRODUCTS MADE WITH NUTS/PEANUTS.

**q. Parking lot**

In accordance with State Law, and as highlighted under Section II-D, arrival and departure, parents must not leave any infant or child under the age of 7 unattended in the car at any time of the year or even for a few minutes since the child would be left in a potentially dangerous situation. Arrival/Departure requires parents to enter center, sign in or out at the computer kiosk in the front office and escort the child to the classroom.

Children may not be dropped off at the door, you MUST walk your child to class and let the teacher know that they are there.

**r. Payment Policy, Fees and Tuition**

**i. Payment Policy for Tuition**

- a. Weekly tuition is due on Monday and is late Tuesday at 6:30pm. There will be a \$15 late fee added to all tuition not received by the due date. If Monday is a holiday you will have until 6:30pm on Wednesday before the late fee applies.
- b. A service charge of \$40 will be assessed on all returned checks or declined tuition express payments. A returned or declined payment is

considered a late payment; therefore a late fee of \$15 will also be added. In addition to the fees incurred, we will only accept cash or money order payments from such time on.

- c. If your account is not current by 6pm Friday afternoon, your child may not return to our center the following week until the account is brought current. After 3 weeks of non-payment, your child will lose their spot. Any paid tuition is non-refundable.
- d. Each account will be reviewed on a regular basis to insure accuracy. If at any time the administration of The Serendipity School has reason to believe your account is not or has not been consistently in good standing, you may be asked to make alternate childcare arrangements.

**ii. Fees:**

- a. All tuition and fees paid are NON-REFUNDABLE
- b. Book and/or supply fees are charged twice annually. See tuition schedule for more details

**iii. Late charges**

A late pick up charge will be assessed for any child here after 6:30pm. The fees are as follows: \$15 for the first 5 minutes and then \$1 per minute after that. These late fees are due when you pick up your child. If parents are late to pick up more than 3 times, we will ask that you make alternate child care arrangements. Children not picked up by 7pm may be referred to and placed in the care of the state child protective agency.

**iv. Child Care Services (CCS)**

The Child Care Services Program requires us to set up a policy for families who do not report attendance for enrolled children as required on a weekly basis. Such is as follows:

- A fee of \$5.00 will be applied if children are not swiped in by the end of the week
- All absences must be recorded in the system by the parent/guardian.
- The full rate will be billed for any unpaid days/weeks by the CCS program de to end of care, pending renewal, failure to clock children in, etc.
- CCS parent fees are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month, NO EXCEPTIONS

**s. Personal items**

We ask that children do not bring any toys from home except on Friday for show-n-tell. All belongings (coats, sweaters, gloves, hats, lunch boxes, bags, etc) brought to our center are required to be labeled with your child's name. please contact the front office for any misplaced items. Lost and found items will be cleared out periodically during the year and unclaimed items will be given to a charitable organization.

The Serendipity School will not be responsible for any items brought from home, including game systems, cell phones, iPods, toys, etc. we will gladly keep any personal items in the front office for safekeeping.

**t. Pets**

According to state licensing standards, all Serendipity School parents must be notified 48 hours in advance if any animals, whether family pets or those part of a special program such as a visiting petting zoo, are present at The Serendipity School. Therefore, please do not bring any animal to school without prior approval from the Director.

**u. Referral Program**

Parents of current students will receive a free week of tuition for **one child** for referring a new family. Credit will be issued after the referred family has attended for one full month at our center.

**v. Room sanitation**

All classrooms and restrooms are cleaned daily by staff. Toys and mouthed objects in the infant and toddler rooms are washed daily with a diluted bleach spray. Washable toys, pillows, etc. are washed weekly.

A licensed exterminating company treats the Center with pesticides for common household pests monthly. The treatment is done after school hours. Further information about the pesticides and treatment schedule can be obtained from the office if requested.

**w. Save and Send**

Periodically during the school year parents will be asked to save and send certain items such as yogurt containers, plastic containers, left over sewing and craft items, fabric scraps, etc. that are needed in the classrooms. All “trashable treasures” are appreciated.

Used toys, clothes, and other items for use on the playgrounds, and classrooms can be donated to The Serendipity School. Items that the Center cannot use will be given to a charitable organization.

**x. Separation Anxiety/Adjustment Process**

Separation Anxiety is a real fear for some children. There are many reasons that children are afraid to leave their parent or have their parent leave them. There are many degrees of anxiety...from simple clinging, quieter than usual, to tears, temper tantrums or even screams of fear.

The teachers and director had had a lot of experience dealing with children’s adjustment processes and separation anxiety is very common among young children, particularly younger toddlers and 2 year olds. Parents should not be embarrassed if their child cries when they leave.

Our recommendation for most families in helping their child adjust to preschool is to:

1. Talk with the child about preschool, the activities, the teachers, and the other children prior to coming to the Center.
2. Bring the child into his/her classroom with a positive attitude. Children are very tuned into their parent’s feelings of anxiety.
3. Reassure him/her that you will return, stating a time in terms of activity after nap or lunch.
4. Kiss him/her goodbye and leave. Lingering can be as upsetting to your child as leaving hastily. **DO NOT SNEAK OUT ON YOUR CHILD**, as it is frightening to all children. Be sure to tell your child goodbye. The teacher will comfort the child if needed and help them get involved in an activity.

Feel free to phone our center at anytime during the day to check on how your child is doing. Sometimes the anxiety continues for weeks, especially if it is the first time that the child is participating in preschool. It may also not begin until the child has been in the center for some time, BUT, it always ends...even in extreme cases.

**y. Special Events & Celebrations**

The Serendipity School will schedule special activities and events throughout the year. Parents are always welcome to join any of the special events with their child (See Section III b for Parent Volunteer Guidelines). The program asks that parents joining us for special events make sure they child and teacher are aware of their departure after the event.

**Birthday Celebrations**

Parents may talk with their child's teacher if they would like to recognize their child's birthday with a special snack. Some suggestions for a nutritious snack include: fruits and yogurt, cheese and crackers or mini muffins. Another suggestions for celebrating your child's birthday could be to donate a children's book with your child's name inside so he/she may get recognitions each time it is used. If you have another idea, please check with the Director.

**Holiday Celebrations**

Holiday traditions of the families and some Christian celebrations may be observed during the year. Parents are encouraged to share their individual family traditions with the class by reading a story, telling about and showing items related to the celebration.

**z. Special needs**

The Serendipity School recognized that any child at any time may have "special needs" due to family emergencies, divorce/separation, moving, illness, allergies, etc. The Center requests that parents keep the classroom teachers and/or Director informed of any situations that may be upsetting to the child or causing disruption in the child's regular routine or typical behavior. The Center will also discuss with parents and/or make appropriate professional referrals to parents with children needing further screening, possible developmental delays or when other concerns arise.

As required by the licensing standards of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children requiring special dietary considerations (such as vegetarian or food allergies) must have a written statement from the child's physician or a registered dietitian stating foods that be avoided and a suggested alternative.

The Serendipity School does not discriminate based on abilities and attempts to be inclusive of all children by providing them a safe environment in which to learn. The Center will work with families of children with identified disabilities and special learning or developmental needs by making developmental placement, additional staff training, and/or modification within the physical environment within reasonable limits. The Director will seriously consider the reasonableness of the adjustments needed for the specialized needs of the individual child in addition to meeting the needs of all children enrolled before making any final decision. The Serendipity School may request that the parent share or fully cover the cost of any specialized training, modifications to the environment or other adjustments needed to accommodate the child.

The Serendipity School does not provided one on one care for children.

**aa. Sunscreen & Insect Repellent**

The Serendipity School staff will not apply sunscreen or bug spray to any child throughout the school year, unless an authorization is completed and submitted to the front office & parents provide the sunscreen and/or bug spray for their child. See front office for the authorization form.

During the summer months as there will be extra outside activities, we will ask for you to apply sunscreen on your child prior to drop off and we may apply sunscreen on your child according to the day's activities, please see our summer schedule.

#### **bb. Termination of Enrollment**

##### **Parent Initiated Withdrawal:**

A two-week written notice, given to the Director, is required for complete withdrawal from the program. The parent is responsible for two weeks tuition after such date.

If you choose to withdraw and re-enroll your child, he/she must be absent from The Serendipity School for 30 or more days, otherwise tuition must continue to be paid.

##### **School Initiated Withdrawal:**

In extreme situations, the Director may terminate a child's enrollment from our center after informing the parents of the area/areas of concern working with the family to resolve the issue in various ways. Adequate notice and suggestions for other arrangements or referrals may be given to parents in these situations.

Other possible causes for school-initiated withdrawal:

- Child has special or behavioral needs which cannot be adequately met with current staffing patterns
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by a parent or child
- Excessive biting in spite of documented interventions
- A child's enrollment may also be terminated if the parent's account is consistently delinquent.

#### **cc. Toilet Learning**

Teachers will work with parents whose children seem to be ready to learn to use the toilet. Staff prefers children remain in diapers until they are ready to achieve significant daytime control and will encourage children showing signs of readiness to use the toilet, especially if their diaper is dry. Children new to wearing underwear should bring several extra pairs of underwear as well as 2 complete changes of clothing, including socks and shoes. Toileting accidents will be dealt with in a calm, pleasant and casual manner. Children vary widely in age for toilet learning with 2 ½ being an average age and some not until 3 (more often boys). Some will show interest at preschool and not at home and vice versa. The staff will work with each child and their family when the child is showing clear signs of readiness.

The Serendipity Staff will keep consistent with the potty training done at home, BUT will NOT potty train the children for their parents.

A child is not considered "potty trained" unless they've experienced a full 30 days without a potty accident. If a child has a potty accident, the potty-training process is to begin again.

#### **dd. Vacation**

After a year of enrollment, an annual week's vacation will be earned. There is no tuition due if the child is absent for a one-week's period and you elect to use the earned weeks' vacation. If a child is absent for a full week (Monday through Friday), and either a week's vacation has not been earned or has already been exhausted, only half of such week's tuition rate will be due. Vacation time may not be used as your two-week's notice.

The vacation week may not be used if your child is in attendance as a way of saving money on tuition. If parents choose not to utilize the vacation week, it may not be carried over from year to year.

**ee. Weather Related Center Closures**

While closing due to inclement weather is extremely rare, The Serendipity School reserves the right to close at any time. We may follow the local independent school district's (NISD) policies regarding inclement weather. When in doubt, please call our office before leaving home in the morning.

**ff. Water Activities**

**Splash Days**

During the summer months the preschool children will participate in Splash days twice a week. Parents with children who wear diapers must bring swim diapers. Parents must give permission for their child to participate in water activities on the enrollment form.

**Swimming Pool**

Children of school age enrolled in Summer Camp must also have permission for their child to go swimming and participate in the water activities. Summer camp will swim once a week.

Parents will need to provide the following items in order for their children to utilize the swimming pool: swimwear, a towel, and must also bring arm floaties if needed.

The child-teacher ratio will be amended while utilizing the swimming pool according to the Childcare Licensing Minimum Standards. All participating teachers are able to swim, and a lifeguard will be present when children are utilizing the swimming pool at all times.

**gg. Transportation**

The Serendipity School provides transportation to and from public school for school-aged children and to and from field trips. Permission must be given by parents on the enrollment form for The Serendipity School to transport a child. Emergency consent forms are kept in each bus for every child transported.

You MUST let the office know in advance if your child will not be picked up from school. There will be a \$15 fee billed to your account if the front office is not notified and attempts to pick up your child from school.

**hh. Policy Changes**

In the event there is a change to any of the above stated policies and procedures, you will be notified in writing.

**III. Family Support and Involvement**

**a. Home- School Communication**

Parents are notified about routine information relating to curriculum, classroom behavior and field trips through their child's take-home folders, through communication via email, or in person.

Parents may contact the office anytime to schedule an individual conference with a teacher or the administrator. Please do not use class time to discuss your concerns or child's progress, as the teacher is responsible for supervising the entire group of children.

#### **b. Visitors/Volunteers**

parents and grandparents are welcome visitors at The Serendipity School always to observe, to volunteer to help in a classroom, or to share a special talent with the children. Family members and friends who are unfamiliar to the staff will need to check in with the front office.

Parents as volunteers add to the quality of The Serendipity School by sharing their time. Possible parent volunteer activities include: helping on a field trip, helping with an activity or special event, reading a book to the class, and assisting in teacher preparation.

Volunteers should familiarize themselves with all sections of the Parent Handbook PRIOR to serving as a volunteer. While volunteers are welcome to interact with the children during playtime and other daily routines, the classroom teacher will handle all guidance, first aid and safety issues with the children. Volunteers must refrain from disciplining any child, including their own, in manners inconsistent with The Serendipity School guidance plan. Volunteers that participate on a regular basis must complete our staff orientation training, a notarized affidavit and a criminal background check conducted as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

#### **c. Breastfeeding Mothers**

The Serendipity School encourages all infant parents to breastfeed. Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breastmilk for their child while in our care. We will provide a comfortable place in our center or within a classroom that enables a mother to breastfeed her child.

### **IV. Supplemental Information**

#### **a. Gang-Free Zone**

any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

#### **b. Minimum Standards and Inspections**

A copy of the Minimum Standards for Childcare is available for parents to review upon request and can also be found at:

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/documents/Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/746\\_Centers.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/documents/Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf)

The most recent inspections for the Health Department, Fire Marshal and Licensing are posted for parents to review at all times

#### **c. Important Phone Numbers/Information**

Poison Control: 1.800.222.1222

Texas Abuse & Neglect Hotline: 1.800.252.5400

Child Care Licensing: 210.337.3399 - [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)