



EAST DALLAS  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Start Young. Involve Parents.

**Parent Handbook**

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# LUMIN EAST DALLAS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ABOUT LUMIN EDUCATION

Lumin Education, formerly known as East Dallas Community Schools was founded by Terry Ford in 1978. The first class, which served eight children in shared space, was opened in response to concerns of neighborhood parents who saw their children falling through the cracks in public school.

With its holistic approach that includes parent education beginning in pregnancy, Montessori Early Head Start (pregnancy to age 3) and public charter school classrooms for children ages 3 to 9, LEDCS works to fulfill its mission of transforming education and proving that all children can succeed when you start young and involve parents.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lumin Education and East Dallas Community School is governed by a Board of Directors. Policy-making, long-term planning, and fiscal responsibility are some of the main functions of the Board. The school director runs the school according to Board policies and is responsible for day-to-day operations of the school.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Lumin East Dallas Community School is:

To transform education by starting young, involving parents, and creating learning environments to inspire children from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To provide an instructional program that will lay the foundation for successful academic achievement in later grades.
2. To teach English to Spanish-dominant children; to provide English-dominant children with exposure to and appreciation of Spanish as a second language.
3. To involve parents in volunteer work through which they can become directly involved in their children's education. Involved parents develop a sense of community with others at the school.
4. To aid in the identification of special needs of children by providing evaluations and therapeutic support when needed.

## VALUES

*We practice*

- *Being kind, loving, and respectful of self and others*
- *Being a compassionate community*
- *Being a dynamic learning community*
- *Integrity*
- *Empowerment*
- *Sustainability*

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

East Dallas Community School admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in administration of the educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.

## ACCREDITATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, LICENSES AND MEMBERSHIPS

Lumin East Dallas Community School is recognized by the Association Montessori Internationale. LEDCS has the following memberships and affiliations with:

- Parents as Teachers
- Department of Family and Protective Services
- Texas Charter School Association

## COMMUNICATION

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Lumin East Dallas Community School  
924 Wayne Street  
Dallas, TX 75223

**Phone:** 214-824-8950

**Fax:** 214-827-7683

**Employee email addresses:** [firstname.lastname@lumineducation.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@lumineducation.org)

**Office Hours:** During the school year the office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

**Family email addresses** – We use email communication to share weekly newsletters and announcements. Please be sure to share an accurate email address so that you have the most updated information.

**Website** – [www.lumineducation.org](http://www.lumineducation.org) – The website has links to Lumin East Dallas Community School. You can learn about volunteer opportunities and log your volunteer hours on this site.

**Facebook and Twitter** – Postings to Facebook and twitter help to keep us connected. You can access our sites directly from the icons found on our home page or you can search for Lumin Education on both mediums. “Like us” so our postings reach a far greater audience.

**School Text Line** – Join our school text line and you will be notified conveniently on your mobile device when school closings or other emergencies occur. Simple text EDCS to 469-328-3277.

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are a vital part of your child's education. They are an opportunity to meet one-on-one with your child's guide to discuss his or her progress and to gain a better understanding of the Montessori materials and philosophy.

Parent conferences are required twice a year (fall and spring). It is a good idea to sign up as soon as the notices go out to schedule a time that is most convenient for you. It is very important that you schedule a conference and then attend that conference on time. In some cases, the classroom teacher will assign a time for you. The guides have set that time aside especially for you and they are looking forward to sharing ideas and information with you. Please call to reschedule if you are unable to attend your conference or if you are running late. If a conference is missed without notice to the guide, the child may not return to school until it has been rescheduled.

Conferences are a special time for parents and guides to meet and concentrate completely on a subject of great interest--your child! For this reason, we request that only the parents or other adult who is intimately involved with the education of the child come to the conference. Please leave all children at home, except for the baby that you can hold in your lap for the whole time.

It is important to know that if there is a concern at any time during the school year the guide will contact the parents and explain his or her observations. Parents need not wait for a regularly scheduled conference time, but may request a conference any time during the school year if they have a concern, a question, or simply an interest in their child's progress.

## OBSERVATION

We welcome observations in the Primary, Elementary, and After-School classrooms by parents, prospective parents, or anyone else truly interested in our programs.

Observing your child in the classroom will help you understand his work and the educational system we use. Parents need not wait for a regularly scheduled observation before conference time, but are welcome any time during the school year. Every parent will observe in the classroom at least twice during the year prior to conference time. Please call the office for an appointment, starting in October. Observations last 20 minutes.

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## OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

All visitors must check in at the office before entering a classroom. The following guidelines are designed to make your visit more enjoyable. Naturally, the children are interested in visitors who come to the classroom. By following these guidelines, you will be able to see the classroom in as close-to-normal conditions as possible.

1. Come into the classroom as quietly as possible. Have a seat in the chair provided and remain there.
2. When you go into the classroom, there may be children doing work on the floor. Be careful not to step on any rugs on the floor, since this is where they lay out their work.
3. The children may talk to you or they may not notice that you are there. If the children talk to you, answer their questions briefly and with a very quiet or whispered voice, so as not to disturb the children who are working.
4. Do not start a conversation or prolong one started by a child. You may suggest that you came to see the boys and girls at their work: "I'd like to see you doing your work, too."
5. Do not expect to see all the children working all the time. Each child is different and works at his or her own pace.
6. Montessori classrooms are orderly, but not necessarily quiet, classrooms. The children at this age need to talk to each other and the guide a great deal.
7. Please do not talk to the guides or walk around the classroom. Please don't feel that the guide is being rude when he or she doesn't stop to talk with you. The guide's top priority is to be working with the children.
8. Please do not take photographs while the children are inside the classroom.
9. You are provided a clipboard and paper to write down any notes or questions that occur to you during your observation.
10. You are welcome to sit quietly in a classroom for about 15 to 20 minutes. We encourage visitors to observe for at least 15 minutes to get a feel for the atmosphere of the classroom.

Observations are meant to be a pleasant experience for both the child and the parent. It is a special time for the child when his parent comes to show an interest in his life at school. Try to maintain a positive attitude while observing the richness of classroom life. Notice all the wonderful things that are happening as the children learn and interact with each other. You are the welcome and honored guest in your child's classroom home.

After you leave the classroom, you may have some questions or concerns. Please feel free to contact the guide or the school director with any comments you might have. As part of your respect for the children, if you notice a child (not your own) behaving inappropriately with another child (not your own), we ask that you not call the parents of those children to share your concern. Rather, bring your concern to the attention of the guide. Although it is possible that this behavior is already being addressed, your input will be valuable.

## ACADEMICS AND PROGRAMS

### TEACHING METHODS

Basic skills in living, reading, writing and mathematics are taught using the Montessori method and materials.

Other approaches may be used if consistent with the school's philosophy. Younger children are usually taught one-on-one. As they grow older, they receive more instruction in small groups. Expectations for work habits, independence and self-motivation are high. Children work at their own pace; materials are presented to challenge, but not overwhelm, the child. Each day some time is spent in group activities to share experiences, read stories, sing songs, or do movement activities.

Each classroom is composed of children of various ages. Older students help younger ones, much as siblings do at home or as students once did in the one-room schoolhouses.

As children become older, the community becomes a resource for valuable lessons. Through field trips to various sites in the city, children receive additional information which may not be available to them in books. From time to time resource people visit the school to demonstrate their crafts or share their experiences.

We do not give letter grades. Instead, the guides observe and record the step-by-step mastery of the materials and lessons presented to each child. Progress is reported to parents through verbal and written comments at conferences. Children leaving the Elementary Class are given a standardized tests to facilitate communication with other schools.

The staff of EDCS functions at its best with the support and commitment of the parents--this is why we say we are "working together for our children." Often, guides ask parents to extend the child's classroom to include the home. Reading to or with your child, sharing your family stories, and simply having your child help with daily home activities are important elements of learning.

## ENROLLMENT

All new student enrollment forms and returning student enrollment forms must be returned by the first day of school in order for your child to be admitted. A ticket will be given in order to be admitted.

If your child is a new student, you will be invited to meet your child's guide during the teacher preparation week. The first week of your child's attendance is an orientation period. For children that are 4 years old, or younger, please anticipate a short day schedule (1 ½ hours) to give your child the opportunity to adjust to his/her new environment and the people in it. We know this is a challenge for our working families, and we appreciate your working with us to give your child the best start. Children that are 5, or older attend the first day of school for regular school hours.

***A Note About Summer Birthdays:*** *At EDCS we are fortunate to be able to respond to a child's individual developmental needs when determining the best placement for your child. It has been our experience that some children with summer birthdays can benefit from continuing in the Primary classroom for an additional period of time after turning 6 years old. Continuing in the Primary classroom allows the young child to become a leader in the class, to mature, and to develop cognitive skills. will decide if this is the best course of action for your child. You and your child's guide will decide if this is the best course of action for your child.*

## PROGRAMS

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### PARENTS AS TEACHERS

#### **(PAT): Pregnancy – Age 3**

The school has a Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program, which serves families with children from pregnancy through age 3. This program is a free service which provides home visits from a trained parent educator once a month. Home visits focus on individual children, their current development, and the ways in which parents can

encourage and support their child's growth. There are group meetings once a month when the parents can get together to provide positive support for each other and learn about topics of interest to all. During a child's enrollment in PAT, the parent educator also provides periodic developmental screening to help ensure that no major developmental difficulty goes by unnoticed.

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program has been in operation at EDCS since 1993 and has proved highly successful with many different kinds of families. Because the PAT program is so helpful to the growth and development of young children under the age of 3, every child in the Toddler Community is automatically enrolled in the PAT program. PAT Program guidelines also apply to children enrolled in the Toddler Community. **If a child is dropped from the PAT program due to lack of parental involvement, then the child will also be removed from the Toddler program.**

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## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Toddler Community (18 mo- 3 years of age)
- Primary Level: Preschool and Kindergarten (ages 3 - 6 years)
- Elementary Level: 1st – 3rd Grade (ages 6 - 9 years)
- Afternoon Bridge-Time Program: For children participating in morning only programs
- After and Before Care (ABC) School program for children enrolled in the Primary and Elementary Classes.

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## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

From time to time children participate in special programs. These programs include tutoring, Reading Recovery classes, and special playtimes in which children may express themselves through toys and/or art media. Enrollment in the school constitutes permission to participate in these special programs, and no separate permission is requested from parents. Parents are notified when their children will be participating in these programs.

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## LIBRARY

Kindergarten age Primary and Elementary students visit the Library, where they may check out a book for one week. Parents are invited to use our Parent/Staff Library. A new book may be lent only if books previously checked out are returned or accounted for. Lost books incur a charge of \$5.00. Occasionally, we offer books for sale or give-away.

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## AFTERNOON BRIDGE-TIME PROGRAM

For the children who participate in morning only programs, the Afternoon Bridge-Time Program allows these children to until 3 o'clock dismissal. Enrollment is limited. When slots are filled, your child may go on a waiting list. As spots become available, children are admitted according to their placement on the waiting list.

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## AFTER AND BEFORE SCHOOL CARE (ABC) PROGRAM

Enrollment in ABC is limited. When the slots are filled, your child may go on a waiting list. As openings become available, children are admitted according to their place on the waiting list. Children can be enrolled for the entire week, or twice a week as a half month option. If this option is chosen, the days that your child stays must be consistent for the duration of the school year. Our school also offers a "one time stay" policy for children, in the

event that you are unable to pick up your child on time after school. In order to participate, you must contact the front office and notify us in advance, so that we can make arrangements accordingly. The fee for one time stays should be paid in advance or upon picking up your child.

Only children enrolled in the ABC Program may stay in the afternoon after 3:00, and 3:30 for elementary. These children are under the care of professionals who guide them in participating in the after school program. By teaching the children to be responsible, the ABC teachers can allow the children maximum freedom and flexibility in their afternoon activities.

Children not enrolled in the school may not attend ABC. Our insurance does not cover them, in case of an accident. The only exception to this rule is when a parent is doing volunteer playground supervision in ABC. If that parent brings a sibling (age 3 or older) of a child enrolled in the school, he or she must keep the sibling under his or her direct supervision at all times.

## DAILY ROUTINES

### TODDLERS

*Ages 18mo – 3 years*

Arrival Time: Transitions are not always easy for toddlers. We make every effort to make arrival time as positive and welcoming as possible. Instead of carrying your toddler to the Toddler House, please let your child walk by your side in order to exercise independence. Bring your child to the front door in a confident manner where the toddler staff will be waiting to welcome him/her. You must sign your child in and out of class on the clipboard located outside of the classroom on the porch.

**Arrival Time: 8:00 a.m.**  
**Departure Time: 11:30 a.m.**

***Toddlers and Departure Time:*** *When you pick up your child, be sure to sign him out on the clipboard near where you pick him up: it is required.*

### CHARTER SCHOOL

**ARRIVAL TIME** Ages 3 – 9 years

**School begins at 8:00am.** Children enrolled in **morning ABC** may arrive at the ABC Building any time between **7:00 and 7:50 a.m.** Children enrolled in the **breakfast program** arrive at **8:00 a.m.** Children who are not enrolled in ABC go directly to their classrooms at 8:00.

\*Primary children are dismissed at 3:00 and Elementary children are dismissed at 3:30.

### CAR DROP-OFF PROCEDURE

If your child is in one of the two Primary Classes, come down Parkview toward East Grand. Enter the Primary driveway from Parkview, and then pull up as far as you can. Stay in the car while a staff member opens the car door and lets your child out. When your child is safely out, look to make sure no children are near your car, then drive on through. Please drive carefully, as other cars may be entering or leaving the Elementary drive and the

Parkview Street parking lot.

If you wish to walk your very young child to class, please park your car in the parking lot.

If your child is in the Elementary Class, please turn into the driveway outside the Elementary building (1003 Parkview). Let your child get out of the car, and then drive on through the driveway, so that the next parent can pull up.

If you are going to get out of your car, even for a moment, please be sure to park in an appropriate place. Please do not park in the driveways at any time as other parents need to be able to drop off their children. If there are no more parking spaces available in the parking lot, you may find a parking place on Parkview, on the other side of the school, or some other appropriate spot.

When dropping your child off in the morning, always make sure he or she has been received by an adult or has entered the classroom before you leave. We cannot be responsible for children left outside the building.

**Cell Phones: Please be respectful of your child and the EDCS staff by giving full attention when dropping off your child, or picking them up. Cell phones are distracting. We ask that you are not on your cell phone during this time.**

**During Severe Weather (Sirens for hail, high winds, and tornados): Children will proceed to the designated safe places according to their location. Parents will be directed to the nearest safe area until the warnings end. Carpool will resume once the warnings end.**

## DEPARTURE

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Children may be released only to parents or to a person designated on the child's emergency card. A photo ID is required to verify anyone new picking up your child. Children may not leave with any other person, even another school parent, without a note or phone call from you.

If you need to pick your child up early for any reason, go to the office and someone will call the classroom to request your child. A child must have a note from a parent covering any special circumstances, such as leaving school early, leaving with someone not specified on the emergency card, going to birthday parties, or missing portions of the school day for any reason. You may e-mail your child's teacher 24 hours in advance as your form of notation. Check with the teacher to make sure that the time of departure or return will not disrupt the child's schedule, or conflict with lunch. If your child will be returning, please check in at the office and he/she will be escorted back to class.

## ABC – AFTER AND BEFORE CARE

**After and Before Care (ABC)** requires that you sign your child out each day before they are released. If you need to call the ABC staff after 3:00 to explain changes in how your child will be picked up that day, call (214) 824-8950, ext. 229

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## PARENT INFORMATION FOLDERS

**F**or children in the toddler program, or ABC there are folders containing school letters and other messages for our families. Please make a point of checking your family's folder daily to collect your messages. Important information regarding such things as tuition, school closings, re-enrollment, and parent work days, are filed in these folders. The folders are located in a file box close to where you pick up your child:

Toddler	Primary	Elementary	ABC
Near front door	Handed out by teacher at carpool	Handed out by teacher at carpool	Near front door inside

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## TARDIES

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Arrival time for all classes is 8:00-8:15. It is important that your child be here and ready for school at that time. A child who is tardy runs the risk of disturbing the classroom, missing lessons and group activities, and losing out on a portion of the work day.

If for some reason your child must arrive late (after 8:15) please follow these procedures which are designed to ensure your child's safety. We must be sure that (1) we know your child is here; and (2) your child arrives safely at his classroom.

1. Call the office and let us know if your child will arrive much later than 8:15 a.m.
2. Park your car and bring your child into the office.
3. Register your child in the office and pick up a tardy slip.
4. Walk your child to their classroom.
5. Make sure you see your child enter the room (with tardy slip in hand), and see the door close behind him/her.

The need for children to be on time for school cannot be stressed enough. The students' success in a Montessori classroom depends largely on their concentration and "work rhythm," that is, how the child moves from one lesson to the next. This rhythm is easily thrown off if children come in late during the morning. You can imagine how difficult this can be for small children. They naturally want to get in tune with their classmates who have already been working for several minutes. Late children want to take a little time to greet friends and re-establish their social connections while others are already working and concentrating. In addition, children who arrive late lose valuable time needed to be able to do the work they need for their full development.

The guides and school director are available to offer suggestions to those families who need assistance to ease the morning transition from home to school. If in the opinion of the guide a child's tardies are too frequent, the parent will be called in to meet with the school director. If tardies continue, a second meeting may be requested. If the child continues to be tardy, he will not be admitted to class, but will be sent home with the parent.

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## ABSENCES

When a child is absent, the parent must notify the school by 10 a.m. or write a note explaining the absence. If the child is out and we have not heard from the parent, the parent will be called.

In some cases a family knows in advance that the child will be absent, such as when the family is planning a trip. In such cases the family should discuss the proposed absence with the teacher to make plans which will enhance, rather than disrupt the child's education.

When a child is not in school, that child is losing valuable instructional time. If a child's absences become

excessive, the guide will contact the parents to discuss what can be done to resolve the problem. Guides make every effort to keep the child's lessons progressing in a timely fashion and can do so if absences are occasional. It is not possible to send "make-up" work home, because so much learning occurs through the use of the material that must remain in the classroom. For this reason older children who are frequently absent may need to attend tutoring classes given by a Montessori-trained teacher. It is the parent's responsibility to arrange and pay for this, if it is needed. Parents should also be aware that excessive absences can adversely affect their child's ability to be accepted at another school when the time comes to make such an application.

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## LATE PICK-UP

Each child is enrolled in a specific program and must be picked at a specified time. As soon as your child's program is over, the teachers are busy with other duties. For this reason we need to stress punctuality. Because of the difficulties in attending to children who are picked up late after 3:00, parents who are late more than three times may be required to enroll their children in the after school program. EDCS closes at 6:00 p.m., so all children must be picked up by then.

The following late fees are charged:

**Toddler:** \$1.00 per family per minute after 11:45 and 3:15 (1 warning)

**Primary: 11:30 pick-up:** \$1.00 per family per minute after 11:45 (1 warning)

**Primary: 3:00 pick-up:** \$1.00 per family per minute after 3:15 (1 warning)

**Elementary: 3:30 pick-up:** \$1.00 per family per minute after 3:45 (1 warning)

**Primary/Elementary ABC 6:00 pick-up:** \$1.00 per family per minute after 6:00 (1 warning)

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## INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Lumin East Dallas Community School and Lindsley Park Community School coordinate on school closings. Tune in to TV channels 4, 5, 8 or 11 to find out if school will be closed due to bad weather, or go to our website, or the television website to confirm.

Join our school text line and you will be notified conveniently on your mobile device when school closings or other emergencies occur.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

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### ITEMS FROM SCHOOL/HOME

When a child brings toys to school, it is distracting and often leads to disagreements, broken or lost toys, and hurt feelings. The guides will remove these items from the classroom and they will need to be collected after school. If for some reason you forget and find yourselves at the gate with an object that needs to stay home, please return to the car with the child, put the object away, and then bring the child back to the gate.

In Primary and Elementary classes, children often like to bring things from home for show and tell. We encourage the children to bring items found in nature, such as a flower, seashell, or an insect in a jar. Art and artifacts from

other countries is also encouraged. The teacher will inform the parents of when show and tell is appropriate for class time.

***A Note About Bringing Items to School: Each classroom is full of beautiful and inviting activities and educational materials which the children are eager to use. Please explain to your child that he or she may not bring toys, jewelry, money, game cards, or other valuable items to school.***

***A Note About Materials Brought Home from School: Occasionally, a child may bring home a piece of one of our classroom materials such as a small cube or colored bead. The materials we use are attractive and familiar, and sometimes children cannot resist putting them in their pockets. Please return the object (the loss of one item or part can render some of our materials useless) and no questions will be asked.***

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## CLOTHING/SHOES/JEWELRY

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### COMMUNITY

Children in the Toddler Community should bring two complete changes of clothes, appropriate for the weather, sent in a plastic bag and labeled with the child's name. Please choose simple clothes your child will learn to manage by herself, such as pull-on pants without buckles or snaps. Cloth training underwear are also required, as no diapers are allowed.

**A Note About Toilet Training:** Children must be toilet trained before entering the Primary Class. Nevertheless, it is natural for young children to have occasional accidents in the transition period, or any time in the early years. We are prepared for this and ask you to send a change of clothing so we may accommodate your child as comfortable as possible. If your child does not show evidence of having mastered this personal control on a regular basis, however, we will ask you keep your child home until he/she has taken this important step in independent function. We will work with you to help your child return to the classroom.

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### PRIMARY CLASS

Children in the Primary Classes should also wear clothing they can easily manage by themselves when they go to the bathroom. The more things children can do independently, the better they feel about themselves. Please send an extra set of clean clothing -- to be kept for emergency situations such as illness or a bathroom accident. If your child is in ABC you will need to send two sets – one for the Primary Classroom and one for ABC. These clothes should be sent in a plastic bag and labeled with your child's name. Accidents can happen to anyone, so please be sure to bring a clean set on the first day of school to be replaced if your child's wet clothes are sent home in the plastic bag. Please send in the new set of clean clothes the very next day. If your child comes home in emergency clothes that belong to the school, please return those clothes immediately, as the school needs them for other emergencies.

Provide comfortable clothing for the school day and be guided by the weather. In cool weather, send a jacket or sweater and a cap. Caps are very important in cold weather, as up to 50% of body heat can be lost through the top of the head.

Whenever possible, label all sweaters, jackets, shoes, socks and personal belongings, and check to be sure that

your child leaves school with his or her belongings and lunchbox. Every year, we collect lost clothing that cannot be returned because there are no labels.

## ELEMENTARY CLASS

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Children in the Elementary Classes should dress in a way that minimizes distractions and allows for maximum movement in the classroom and outdoors.

## APPROPRIATE SCHOOL ATTIRE FOR ALL CLASSROOMS

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Consider both the appropriateness and safety of your child's clothing.

**Shoes:** Tennis or rubber soled shoes are appropriate for school because they are comfortable, easy to run and play in, and do not come off easily. Please do not send your child in boots; they are awkward on the playground and climbing equipment and the heels hurt others easily. Flip-flops, clogs, open-toed sandals and backless shoes fall off easily during active play and can present a danger on playground equipment, as well.

**\* *Light up shoes are not permitted- they are distracting.***

**Clothing:** As noted above, children should wear comfortable clothing that is appropriate for the weather and easy for them to manage independently. Clothing, lunch kits and book bags with cartoon, TV and other popular characters are not permitted as they often cause distraction and competition in the classroom.

**Jewelry:** If your child's ears are pierced, a simple pair of earrings is permitted. Bracelets, rings, and necklaces can be worn at home: jewelry can be broken or lost, and small pieces can be dangerous in little hands and mouths.

In addition, consider your child's hair-do. It is helpful for children of all ages to have their hair pulled back from the face enough to be able to work easily and see the materials well. Hair that falls in a young child's face is distracting, interferes with learning, and can fall into her food during mealtimes. Large hair ornaments, such as big bows and some barrettes, can also get in the way. In addition, they may get lost on the playground.

## NUTRITION

**W**hat a child eats has everything to do with his or her performance throughout the day. At EDCS, we want to provide our children with healthy foods that will nourish their bodies and not harm them. For this reason, we do not permit foods with high sugar or salt content in the classroom. This stipulation is carried through into all-school functions and lunches. We also try to keep sugar and salt to a minimum in any food preparation undertaken by the children, as too much sugar or salt may be detrimental to good health and behavior. Because children learn by example, the example of nutritious food preparation is an important one.

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## BREAKFAST

All children need to start the day with a healthy, balanced breakfast to function effectively. Please help your child by providing a good breakfast or enroll in our breakfast program. Avoid sugar, corn syrup, artificial flavorings and other additives. Items such as pop tarts, sweet rolls and presweetened cereals are convenient, but can adversely affect your child's health, behavior, concentration and performance. Foods such as eggs, whole-grain breads or muffins, fruits, oatmeal, multi-grain cereals, pure juice smoothies or yogurt can give your child a good start for the day.

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## SNACKS

We provide food for the children at school during the course of the day. Snack is provided for the children. Snacks are generally grains, protein, and/or fruits, with milk or fruit juice to drink. Snacks are not intended to replace a meal.

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## LUNCH

Extended day children and elementary children bring their own lunches from the time they enter Primary. You may also enroll in the school's lunch program and lunch will be provided. You will be billed for meals eaten.

Primary and Elementary children should bring nutritious foods for their mid-day meal. Items that contain high amounts of sugar or salt (such as candy or chips) will be sent home uneaten- we are a NO SUGAR, NO JUNK FOOD School. Pack only as much as you think your child can eat. If food returns home to you, it means either that you sent more than your child could eat, or that the food item had unacceptable amounts of salt or sugar. Make sure the food items are sent in containers your child can open and close by himself. No cans with pull up lids are permitted. Please do not send frozen dinners. If, however, your child's lunch needs to be heated please follow classroom guidelines.

If your child forgets his lunch, the teacher will provide lunch if there are extra meals leftover from our lunch program and you will be charged for the meal.

Here are some ideas for tasty and nutritious lunches. Experiment a little--you may be surprised to find that your child enjoys a variety of "good-for-you" foods.

### **PROTEIN**

Meat, fish, chicken, boiled eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese or peanut butter in a whole-grain sandwich. Please cut sandwiches into quarters for primary children and halves for elementary children.

### **GRAINS**

Whole-grain bread, corn tortillas, crackers, sunflower seeds or nuts.

### **VEGETABLES**

A slice or wedge of fresh vegetable such as carrot, tomato, celery, cucumber, lettuce or avocado.

### **FRUITS**

Banana, peach, plum, strawberries, apple, orange or grapefruit. It is easier if the fruit is peeled and sectioned for your child.

### **DRINKS**

It is not necessary to send drinks. The school provides water at lunch time, or milk if your child is in the lunch program.

Please label lunch boxes or bags and all containers. Please, do not send candy, cupcakes, cookies, chips, fruit rolls, pudding, jello, snack packs or gum. Such foods are removed from the child's lunch and are sent home.

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## SPECIAL EVENTS, BIRTHDAYS, AND CELEBRATIONS

Many children enjoy sharing a birthday treat with the class. If you would like to send a treat for the class, please schedule a time for the treat with the guide or office. Please do not send sugary treats such as cake, cookies, or candy. Some children have peanut allergies, so please ask the teacher before sending in anything containing

nuts. Healthy snacks can be just as festive. Here are several ideas for healthy birthday treats:

- popcorn in baggies
- fruit kebabs or fruit tray
- vegetable tray
- blueberry muffins/lemon and poppy seed muffins/pound cake
- trail mix in little cups

Please do not bring or send presents for your child to the school. If your child is having a birthday party please mail the invitations, unless you are inviting every child in the class, in which case parents may hand out invitations after school. Also, please remember that children may not go home with other children, even for a birthday party, without a note or a call from the child's parent.

The children at East Dallas Community School come from a wide variety of backgrounds. It is the philosophy of the school to respect each child's culture and religion. As part of our cultural program, during the school year we do honor various religions, ethnicities and cultures. We encourage parents to share their family's history and rituals with our classes.

## SETTING LIMITS ON CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORS

Discipline is an essential part of any child's education. It provides guidance in what behavior is acceptable in order for a child to flourish, and for the group to be safe and develop healthy relationships. It is our goal at East Dallas Community School to provide the kind of guidance and limits that promote a child's growth, allow freedom of expression, and support the child's ability to control himself in a socially acceptable way.

It is the philosophy of the school that setting limits is most effective for the child's development if handled in a way that shows firmness, kindness, and respect for all parties concerned. For the child's well-being we encourage parents to work together with us as partners in matters that relate to discipline. We recognize that different families have different ways of raising their children, and that each family has the right to choose the way of educating its children that it thinks is best. For this reason it is important to choose a school that has a philosophy of education and discipline that is generally consistent with your own. Corporal punishment is not used at the school and we ask parents not to use it at home for behaviors that occurred at school.

Classroom guides do much to support positive behavior. The number of "no's" in the classroom are kept to a minimum. Children don't have to be told, "Don't touch," because the classroom materials are there to be manipulated and explored. Lessons are given to show polite ways to meet one's needs. Community life and cooperation are fostered through many group activities. In addition, the adults in the classroom set an example of respectful and courteous behavior.

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## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

All students enrolled at *East Dallas Community School* shall recognize the following rights and responsibilities of each student at the school:

- Each child has the right to physical safety.
- Each child has the right to emotional safety. Persistent teasing, taunting or other forms of harassment are not acceptable.
- Each child has the right to work in the classroom without undue interruption.

Behavior which violates these basic rights shall be addressed by the classroom teacher. Repeated or persistent negative behavior shall be addressed by the Director and/or an official of the school designated by the Director, along with the classroom teacher. Throughout the process parents will be both informed and consulted in attempts to improve problem behavior.

Persistent, unresolved behavior problems on the part of a student, or parental failure to seriously respond and attempt to correct behavior problems in concert with the school, may result in consequences including suspension or expulsion.

For students eligible for special education services, the school recognizes exceptions for students whose behavior is a reflection of their disability.

Discipline, including suspension and expulsion, for students eligible for special education services, will be consistent with regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the Texas Education Code (TEC). Specifically, 34 CFR 121(d) [ Free Appropriate Public Education]; 34 CFR 300.522 [Determination of Setting]; TEC Chapter 37.004 [Placement of Students with Disabilities]

**Expulsion** – The permanent removal of a student from school. Re-application to the school is not permitted.

**Suspension**- The temporary exclusion of a student from attending regular classes. In some cases the suspension may be in-school. A cumulative total of ten suspended days, whether in school or out of school, during any school year, may result in expulsion.

**A Note About Biting:** Although it is normal for most children under three years of age to bite from time to time, we recognize that biting is upsetting for the child who is bitten, the teachers, and the parents of both children involved.

Humans are oral creatures. Adults may express oral tendencies by overeating, chewing gum, smoking, chewing pencils, or biting finger nails to relieve anxiety or stress. Children who have not acquired verbal skills do not have the ability to tell us when they are anxious, upset, or stressed, and as a result, they may bite. Children who are in pain due to teething also have a tendency to bite. We also recognize that some children bite just to get attention, even if it is negative.

Our staff is trained to give all of their attention to the child who is bitten. TLC and hugs will be given to the injured child, while the child who did the biting will be told very sternly, “No biting,” and then ignored while the bitten child is comforted.

Each time a child bites, an incident report is given to the parents of the child who is bitten, and the biter’s parents are also informed. We follow privacy acts and do not release the children’s names to other parents.

If a child bites consistently for more than two weeks, the parent will be asked for support at home to help end the biting. If the situation doesn’t improve immediately a parent conference will be scheduled. If the parents of the biter do not support the parent conference, the child will be disenrolled. A plan of action will be formed during the parent conference. With all parties working together the situation should be resolved. As long as the situation is improving, the child will not be disenrolled. If it is determined that the problem is not improving, then the child will be disenrolled.

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## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD’S BEHAVIOR AT HOME

Parent involvement extends into the home also. By working with your child at home and discussing the events of the school day with her, you are reinforcing the importance of school and your interest in your child's welfare.

Some of the activities that parents can do at home are described in the handouts that are sent home in the parents' folders. Here are some examples of things you can do to help your child at home. Check with your child’s

guide for other ideas.

1. Read to your child every day.
2. Have conversations with your child every day.
3. Include your child in daily activities such as cooking and doing laundry. While sorting laundry, for example, children observe, classify, listen, talk, and learn. Language, experience, and concept development all contribute to the later development of reading, writing, and mathematics.
4. Provide regular, consistent routines that help your child get the most out of his experiences at school. These include a reasonable bed-time and enough time in the morning to allow for unhurried dressing and eating.
5. Nurture your child's growing independence in taking care of himself--find ways to enable your child to dress or feed himself, for example. As your child gets older, he can prepare his own school lunch and take greater responsibility for his own belongings.
6. Limit TV time. Too much TV can hinder children's physical fitness, and can have a negative effect on social development and school achievement. It takes time away from other more wholesome and creative activities, such as playing outside, reading, and talking. It can also expose children to violent scenes that can lead to an increase in aggressive behavior. If TV is permitted, be sure to watch with your child so you can monitor and discuss what he sees.

If you have any questions or concerns about how you can best support your child's development at home, please talk them over with your child's guide or the school director.

## SCREENING, TESTING AND EVALUATION

### SCREENING

In compliance with Texas state law, children ages 4 and older are screened for vision and hearing impairment by a state-certified screener. It is important that your child be in school for the screening as no make-up screening is available. We will let you know the dates of vision and hearing screenings.

Other screenings may also be available to the student body from time to time. These include speech and language screening, developmental screening, dental screening, and/or physical examinations of the children. Your child's presence at the school is considered permission to participate in screenings. You will be notified when such screenings will take place.

We are very grateful for the services provided by professionals in doing the screenings. Please remember that screenings only indicate possible areas that need further investigation. They do not provide diagnoses for any specific condition a child might have.

### TESTING AND EVALUATION

From time to time the school requires students to have further evaluations--medical, educational, or psychological--to assist us in our mission to help each child reach his full potential. Evaluations often give us the guidance we need to better serve the needs of an individual child. In some cases the results of an evaluation indicate that further services must be found outside the school. Such services might include speech therapy, counseling sessions, or some other adjunct to our educational services.

The Montessori philosophy and approach to education can accommodate a wide range of abilities and learning

styles. At EDCS our goal is to provide an ideal learning environment based on Montessori principles, with appropriate modifications, if possible, that will guide and nurture the full development of children with learning differences.

All children occasionally display some behaviors which interfere with their learning and/or with the functioning of their group. Examples include difficulty in maintaining focused attention, impulsive behavior that can interfere with task completion and or social relations, and oppositional behavior. In some cases, the behavior is marked enough, either in intensity or persistence or both, that the guides become concerned about the child's ability to learn adequately in our classroom environment, or about the child's disruptive effects on the class, or both.

If a guide observes that a child is exhibiting characteristics of being at risk for a learning difference, he or she may request observation of the child and consultation by a learning support team, composed of the child's guide, the school director, the child's parents and at least one other qualified professional. The learning support team will make suggestions for ways to help the child function more successfully at school. This may include strategies to be followed in the classroom and at home, the use of outside resources such as counseling or tutoring, and/or modifications to the classroom or home environment to better accommodate the student's learning style. The learning support team will communicate regularly to monitor progress and make adjustments to the plan, if necessary. After six weeks of implementing the recommended strategies, another conference will be held to assess the success of the approach. In some cases, evaluation or diagnostic testing may be required to more precisely identify a child's educational needs. If it is determined that the EDCS classroom environment cannot adequately meet the needs of the child, the guide and school director will meet with the parents to explore solutions.

If at any time the teaching staff is concerned about your child's progress, they will contact you and discuss what they have observed. Please make it a point to stay in close touch with your child's guide--this is how we can best work together.

## PARENT EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT

### PARENT EDUCATION

Parents frequently have questions about child development and parenting skills. At EDCS, parent education often occurs in an informal manner, as parents talk with members of the teaching staff or with the school director in the office. In addition, the trained parent educators who work with the Parents as Teacher program are available to all parents who wish to discuss a parenting question or concern. Handouts of interest to parents are sent home in the Wednesday Memo from time to time.

Our school offers parent education meetings, seminars and workshops to parents free of charge. Every effort is made to find topics that are important and interesting to parents, and which will also help the child's development.

All parents are expected to participate in some form of parent education, including attendance at parent conferences. In some cases, parent education classes or family counseling may be required as a condition of continued enrollment in the school.

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is very important to a successful parent-school partnership. Parents are involved with their children's education at EDCS in a variety of ways. We encourage parents to talk with the guides and observe in the classrooms. Other ways parents can get involved include serving in parent leadership positions, reading the weekly memo, volunteer work, parent work days, accompanying the class on field trips, support at home, and participation in parent education classes and events.

In combination with other programs offered at our school, we offer educational support to students through

the funds we receive from Title I. Once a year, a small group of parents, teachers and staff meet to assess needs and to set goals for federally funded programs through our CIP (Campus Improvement Plan).

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## VOLUNTEER WORK (18 HOURS FOR CHARTER STUDENTS)

Parents make an important contribution to the school in the area of volunteer work. Volunteer work can include anything from helping out with after-school care and field trips to working on classroom materials and office mailings. Regardless of the task, it helps us operate the school better.

Parent volunteer work is also important to the children. They see that their parents value the school by taking the time from their busy schedules to help. The message the children receive through the parents' actions is: "School is important and so is your work at school." The message to the children from the school is: "Your family is important; their work is valuable."

Experience has taught us that it is difficult to do volunteer work while trying to care for young children. Please arrange for someone else to look after your children while you are doing volunteer work at the school.

### **For Toddlers only:**

Parents of children in the toddler classroom can obtain tuition reduction for volunteering, since this is a private program. Volunteer time must be recorded in the office. All volunteer work for a school year must be finished by May. All volunteer hours worked after that date, or extra hours that have been accumulated before that date, will count toward tuition for the next school year. No cash refunds are given for extra volunteer work.

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## PARENT WORK DAYS

Parent Work Days are scheduled twice a year to give all the parents an opportunity to work together to make EDCS a better place for their children. On past Parent Work Days, parents have built playgrounds and renovated buildings. Every Parent Work Day brings new tasks and new opportunities to get to know the other parents and children.

Light refreshments and child care are provided, and good times seem to happen naturally. We encourage all parents to come and lend a hand to build a better school.

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## PARENT LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

We consider that every parent who participates in the life of the school is acting as a leader on some level. Many times parents make helpful suggestions, take initiative to improve something at the school, or participate in school life in a way that demonstrates this leadership.

The persons in our Parent Organization act as parent leaders who organize parts of school events such as Parent Work Days and Graduation, working in coordination with school staff. They take full responsibility for other events. Because there is a close working relationship between the parent leaders and school staff, these events have proved to be very successful and beneficial to parents and the school. In addition, room parents for each classroom are asked to help with phone calls, organizing transportation for field trips, and other activities that directly benefit the classrooms or the school as a whole. It is encouraged for parents to join a committee in our Parent Organization.

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## PARENTAL RIGHTS

Parents have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of his/her child's classroom teacher.

## HEALTH

While we want to have every healthy child in attendance every day, a child who is ill must not be sent to school. Children who are contagious need to be isolated from well children. The school follows the guidelines indicated on the chart entitled "Communicable Disease Chart for Schools and Child Care Centers," by the Texas Department of Health. Parents are welcome to come to the office and refer to this chart at any time.

Parents often wonder if a child is well enough to attend school. The following is adapted from a draft of the American Academy of Pediatrics/American Public Health Association Reference Standards. These signs indicate that a child should stay home:

- VERY UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR, such as extreme lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, or difficult breathing.
- FEVER of 101 degrees Fahrenheit under the arm; a child who has had fever needs to stay home until free of fever for 24 hours.
- DIARRHEA refers to more stools than the child's usual pattern, with increased stool water or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper or toilet use.
- VOMITING two or more times in the previous 24 hours; an exception is made if a qualified medical person states that the vomiting is caused by a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- MOUTH SORES WITH DROOLING, unless the child's physician or local health authority states the child is non-infectious.
- RASH WITH FEVER, DRAINING, AND/OR BEHAVIOR CHANGES THAT MIGHT SIGNIFY ILLNESS, until a physician has determined the child does not have a communicable disease.
- PURULENT CONJUNCTIVITIS or pinkeye, which may show itself as pinkness or redness of the eye and may also be accompanied by white or yellow eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep. Children may return 24 hours after treatment begins (once you have gone to the eye Doctor, received drops and are being treated with the proper medication). Parents must send in eye drops for application, if the prescription calls for medication to be administered more than twice a day.
- INFESTATION, such as scabies or head lice, Children may return 24 hours after treatment begins, unless there is a statement from the child's physician giving alternate instructions. Note: ALL EGGS must be removed before child is admitted back to school.
- IMPETIGO, until 24 hours after treatment begins.
- STREPTOCOCCAL PHARYNGITIS or strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment begins and until the child has been without fever for 24 hours.
- PINWORM INFECTION, until 24 hours after treatment begins.
- RINGWORM INFECTION, until 24 hours after treatment begins.
- CHICKEN POX (varicella), until six days after the onset of the rash or until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- OTHER DISEASES, such as tuberculosis, mumps, measles, rubella, and hepatitis A virus infection, until the child's physician or local health department says the child is non-infectious.

In addition, there may be times when your child may not seem to be ill, but still may need to be seen by a physician or other qualified health personnel. For example, if your child has a greenish-yellow nasal discharge which has not improved after 10 days, your child may have an infection which needs attention.

Very young children, in particular, need to stay home when they are not feeling well. Toddlers cannot express themselves clearly about how they feel, and we often have to rely on non-verbal communication. Parents can usually tell when their toddler is “out of sorts” or “not himself.” Toddlers who are ill, coming down with something or just getting over something need to stay home. Such children may not have a fever, but they may be coughing, have a runny nose, or be crying “over every little thing.” These children are telling us that they need to stay home where they can rest. They are not ready for the active toddler environment, and they can expose other children to germs at an age when infections spread easily.

No matter how careful parents are, there may be times when once the child is at school, it is determined that she would be better off at home. If the guide deems a child to be too uncomfortable to stay at school, or just not feeling well enough to participate in the activities of the community, then that child’s parents will be called to come and take the child home. Please be sure we always have a number on file where we may reach a responsible adult who will be able to care for your child at such times.

If the school calls you to pick up your child, please do so quickly. We do not have the facilities to look after ill children properly, and your child will need you or some other comforting, reassuring adult to take care of her in the familiarity of home. Be sure that there are enough names and phone numbers on your child's emergency card to ensure that we can reach someone right away.

If your child is absent because of illness, please call the school and inform us concerning the nature of the illness and the length of time your child may be out of school. We must be notified immediately if your child has a communicable disease so that we may notify other parents. When your child returns to school, we need a written note with the following information:

1. **Your child's name,**
2. **The dates your child was absent, and**
3. **The reason for your child's absence.**

## MEDICATIONS

State law does not allow us to administer any medication without written instructions from parents. If your child will need medication during the school day, please fill out the Medication Clipboard in the office and give the medicine to the receptionist. If you arrive before the receptionist, you may note the information on the medical clipboard in ABC. Give the clipboard and medicine to the adult in charge and ask him or her to see that the appropriate person gets it. Call the office and find out where you can pick up the medicine at the end of the day, which varies with pick-up time. The clipboard must be filled out for every day your child is to receive medication, or the medicine cannot be given. All unused medication will be thrown away after one month. We cannot administer any medication after its expiration date.

Handy hint: If a prescription medicine is to be given for several days, ask the pharmacists to divide the medication and put it into two containers. That way one can stay at school, and the other at home. Most pharmacists are willing to do this.

**\*PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS** must be in the original container labeled with:

1. The child's name,
2. The date of administration,
3. Directions stating dosage amount and times, and

#### 4. The doctor's name

**\*NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION** may be given only with the parent's written directions for administration (these must be in accordance with label instructions). The instructions and written permission must be provided daily. The medicine must be labeled with:

- The child's name, and
- The date of administration.

First aid supplies are kept at the school for minor emergencies. If a major emergency occurs, you will be notified by telephone immediately. It is very important that we have on file the name of the person to be contacted if you cannot be reached. Please IMMEDIATELY notify the office of any changes in address, place of employment or phone numbers. In the event of your absence, a medical release form signed by you is required to seek emergency treatment.

## PREVENTION OF ILLNESS

The single most effective way to prevent the spread of common diseases is to wash one's hands – thoroughly and often!

1. When children first get home
2. After using the toilet
3. Before preparing food
4. Before eating food
5. After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing
6. After helping a child use the toilet, blow nose, sneeze, or cough
7. After diapering

We teach the children to do this at school, and we would greatly appreciate your reinforcing these useful habits at home. A few tips for hand washing:

1. Rub hands with soap for at least 15 seconds. Wash all over hands.
2. When you go to a public restroom, leave the water running while you get a paper towel; then turn off the tap with the paper towel rather than using your clean hands.
3. Keep lotion by the sink to use after each hand washing. This helps keep the skin comfortable and soft, and encourages frequent hand washing.

## TUITION PAYMENT

### Due the 1<sup>st</sup> of Each Month

The tuition deadline for each payment is the 1st of each month, beginning in September and continuing through May (9 equal payments). If the 1st of the month falls on a day when there is no school, such as a weekend or holiday, then payment should be made no later than the last school day before the 1st of the month. As set out in

the enrollment contract, tuition must be paid in full each month by the tuition deadline in order for your child to return to school. Please do not send your child to school if your tuition has not been paid, or your child may be sent home. If, at any time, you are unable to make your payment in a timely manner, please speak to the school director.

Many parents prefer to pay their tuition weekly. If you would like to pay weekly, be sure to begin making weekly payments the first week of August so that the first tuition installment will be paid in full by September 1.

### **LOCATION OF TUITION BOXES**

Tuition may be left in the locked boxes located in ABC and in the office door. Be sure to put the money or check in an envelope and fill out the front of the envelope.

### **For Toddlers Only:**

Volunteer work counts toward tuition at the rate of 1½ hour per week, or 6 hours per month, up to a maximum of 54 hours per year.

## **BORROWING ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL**

Although the school encourages parents and children to borrow books from the Library, that is all the school can lend to the families of the school. From time to time parents wonder if they may borrow items that would be useful for a non-school function, but school policy does not permit us to make such loans.

## **ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

The school has accident insurance for the children enrolled in the school. Its coverage begins only where your existing insurance ends, and it covers only accidents that occur at school during school hours. If you have any questions about our coverage, or if you need claim forms for an accident your child had at school, ask the business office.

## **EMERGENCY RELOCATION**

It is highly unlikely that the children will ever need to be relocated away from the East Dallas Community School campus. However, in case of an emergency such as a fire, everyone may be ordered to leave the premises. If this happens, the children will be taken to the Samuell-Grand Recreation Center at 6200 East Grand Avenue. It is located near the school on East Grand, just north of the Mt. Auburn Elementary School. The telephone number is (214) 670-1383.

*If you have any questions about any of the topics discussed above, or any aspect of your child's experience at East Dallas Community School, please let us know. We are always happy to meet with you and work together on behalf of your child. We are glad that your family is a part of East Dallas Community School, and we are looking forward to a great year together!*

*Updated 2014 - 2015*