



The Ashford Rise School™  
OF DALLAS



# FAMILY HANDBOOK

**Operating Policies and Procedures**  
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The YMCA Rise School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. Child day care operations are public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAA), Title III. If you believe that such an operation may be practicing discrimination in violation of Title III, you may call the ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Dear Parents,

The Ashford Rise School of Dallas at the Moody Family YMCA welcomes you to a new year filled with opportunities for growth for your children. We are excited that you are part of our school and we look forward to building a warm and caring relationship with you and your child over the course of your time with us. It is truly a gift to be able to share with you the most critical and important years of your child's development and we strive to provide every child with activities that encourage a health spirit, mind and body.

The Family Handbook was designed to provide families with an overview of the program and the basic structure and standards of Rise. We hope that you find the information contained in this family handbook helpful. The handbook is organized so that you can become familiar with the basic philosophy and goals of the program, as well as the rules guiding our day to day operations. As the handbook is revised on an annual basis, there is important information for both new and returning families. Please review this handbook and feel free to seek additional information or clarification from the staff. Additional information about the Rise program is in The Rise Policies and Procedures manual and on the Rise website at [The Ashford Rise School of Dallas](#)

Parents are valuable people to The Rise School. As a parent, you are an essential component of what makes Rise successful. You are encouraged to share your ideas, interests, special talents, and enthusiasm with us. Welcome! We are excited to have you as part of The Ashford Rise School of Dallas.

Sincerely,

Maude Pampel  
Director  
The Ashford Rise School of Dallas

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# **About The Ashford Rise School**

## **History of Rise**

When a local Dallas family gave birth to twins, on Easter Sunday in 1995, their lives changed dramatically when their infant son was diagnosed with Down syndrome. Since that day, they have been busy raising three active children and at the same time researching what could and should be done for children with developmental disabilities. This research involved hundreds of meetings and numerous trips to determine what vital element was missing. They visited with parents, schools, institutions, doctors, hospitals, and homes for people with special needs hoping to find something that would significantly improve the lives of these special children and their families.

This family found that special "something" in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Rise Program at the University of Alabama was founded in 1975. It is a program which focuses on the needs of toddlers and preschoolers who have developmental disabilities. A unique aspect of the program is the integration of children having developmental disabilities with peers not having developmental concerns, which has resulted in children's achievements beyond previous expectations. With enthusiasm and encouragement, this family proceeded to raise the necessary initial funds to establish The Rise School in Dallas and a Rise School in Houston, which model the RISE Program of the Stallings Center at the University of Alabama. The Rise School of Dallas opened April 16, 1998 with one classroom. In August 2016 The Rise School of Dallas merged with the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas and is now The Ashford Rise School of Dallas located in the Moody Family YMCA. The school now has now expanded to six classrooms for up to 60 children per day. The YMCA is approved by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization.

## **Description of Rise**

The Rise Program is a nationally recognized early childhood education program that is dedicated to excellence in service, research, and teaching. Presently, The Rise School of Dallas serves a capacity of 60 children per day in six classrooms. The school serves young children ages 6 months through age six with diverse abilities in an inclusive environment. The Rise Model is a unique blend of early childhood education, child development, early childhood special education, and integrated therapy. The purpose of the program is to support families and to optimally prepare children for their next educational environment.

## **Rise Goal Statement**

The purpose of The Rise School of Dallas is to:

- Provide exemplary services based on recommended practices to young children with diverse abilities and their families;
- Offer instructional opportunities through collaboration with various academic programs at local colleges and universities;
- Engage in research that positively influences practice in the field of early childhood education at the local, state and national levels;
- Interface with the community through outreach and public awareness activities;
- Disseminate information and provide technical assistance to other community based agencies; and
- Affect education policy and systems change at the local, state and national levels.

## **School Philosophy**

The goals of Rise are to (a) provide family-centered services designed to meet the individualized needs of all children and families; (b) provide a blend of educational and therapy services within the context of a developmentally appropriate curriculum; and (c) prepare children for their next educational environment. The school adheres to the philosophy and recommended practices of both early childhood special education and general early childhood education. The philosophy is based on the following premises and design of the Rise Program at the University of Alabama:

- Services are family-centered with particular emphasis placed on the family as the primary decision-maker in each child's education.
- The assessment process is dynamic and ongoing and includes multiple procedures, information sources and settings. Assessment is linked to instruction.
- Services are designed around an individualized instructional plan consisting of goals and objectives based on family's concerns, priorities and resources, the child's strengths and needs, and expectations of the child's next learning environment.
- Services are offered that vary in intensity and structure, based on the individual and group needs of the children and their families.
- Children's development is promoted in all areas including gross and fine motor skills, independence, cognitive skills, social competence and emotional growth, and communication skills.
- Therapy services (i.e., physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and music therapy) are provided within the context of the educational environment using an integrated approach. Therapy goals are educationally relevant and are implemented collaboratively by the therapists and teaching staff.
- The foundation of the learning environment and activities is based on general early childhood education guidelines, which are blended with recommended practices from early childhood special education.
- Specially designed instruction and curricular adaptations and accommodations are embedded in the daily activities of the classroom.
- The curriculum is designed to foster children's self-confidence, self-esteem, independence and curiosity.
- The curriculum is guided by functional objectives that support children in their current environment and prepare them for more inclusive environments.
- The curriculum reflects a balance between child-initiated and teacher-supported activities.
- The program addresses the children's transitions from one classroom to another and transitions to other more inclusive educational environments.

***All children learn at a different rate and pace. It is the goal of The YMCA Rise School to work toward achieving an individual's full potential at a pace unique to each child.***

## **Program information**

### **The Ashford Rise Program Staff**

The Rise Program staff consists of:

- 1 Preschool Director
- 1 Director of Development
- 1 Office Manager
- 1 Office Associate (Part-time)
- 1 Event Planner (Part-time)
- 1 Educational Coordinator (Part-time)
- 6 Lead Classroom Teachers
- 12 Teacher Assistants
- 5 Supported Employment Classroom Assistants (part-time)
- 1 Physical Therapist (part-time)
- 1 Occupational Therapist (part-time)
- 1 Speech Therapist (part-time)
- 1 Music Therapist (part-time)

Background checks are conducted on all staff, volunteers and consultants who work at Rise.

### **Supported Employment Classroom Assistants**

The YMCA Rise School provides supported employment opportunities to adults with disabilities. Supported employment classroom assistants receive on-the-job training from job coaches until they are comfortable with the routines involved in their jobs.

### **Evaluation/Curriculum-Based Assessment**

Children with developmental disabilities receive a formal developmental evaluation. This evaluation is conducted using a format that includes parent information and the teacher, educational coordinator, speech, music, physical and occupational therapists assessing the child in the classroom environment. Within 8 weeks of enrollment, an Individualized Instructional Plan (IIP) is developed based on the recommendations of Rise's team of professionals and the child's family. This plan identifies the developmental strengths, needs, and priorities for each child, and outlines a set of goals around which the child's services are individualized. These goals are formally reviewed every six months following the implementation of a child's IIP. A formal developmental evaluation is conducted annually by the Rise team or child's school district.

Children without disabilities are also evaluated using a developmental checklist, parent questionnaire, and formal/informal assessments by the teacher and as needed input from the music speech, physical, and occupational therapists.

### **Class Description**

The program houses six classrooms serving 7-12 students per classroom. Children are assigned to classrooms based on their chronological age and educational needs. The classrooms include: infants, young toddler class, older toddler class, two preschool classes, and a pre-kindergarten class. Each classroom employs a teacher who has a Master's degree or is pursuing his/her Master's degree, and has prior teaching experience, which may include special training at another Rise School, and two instructional teacher assistants. Rise strives to maintain a ratio of one adult for every three to four children. Children are under the supervision of a responsible adult at all times.

During the typical school day, each child will follow a schedule that includes individual activities, group activities, gross motor play indoors and/or outdoors, therapeutic services, lunch, snacks and rest. Children may or may not sleep at rest time. Each child's schedule is individualized so that the day can include as many learning opportunities as possible. The daily schedule is posted in each classroom. A weekly classroom report will inform parents of the instructional theme of the week as well as classroom activities.

### **Therapy**

Rise offers several services to children that may include physical, occupational, speech and language, and music therapies using a collaborative/consultative service delivery model. Many of these services are delivered through an integrated approach in which the therapeutic activities are provided routinely by the teachers and instructional teacher assistants with ongoing input from the therapists. The therapeutic activities are integrated into the daily routine of each classroom. The therapists monitor the activities on a regular basis. Using this approach, therapy is delivered in an efficient manner during a child's school day. Recommendations are also provided to families for carry over in the home environment. Communication is encouraged with other private service providers in order to maximize progress.

### **Curriculum**

The Rise curriculum is based on the **A**ssessment, **E**valuation, **P**rogramming **S**ystem (**AEPS**). The **AEPS** combines an activity-based preschool curriculum with an assessment system in the areas of cognitive, fine motor, gross motor, adaptive, social and social-communication. Instruction is play-centered and multi-sensory. All activities are age appropriate and motivating to children. Activities are chosen that address skills in the above areas.

In observance of practices adhered to by all Rise programs, parents are requested to complete the *AEPS Family Report* in October and April of each year. Each child's progress on the **AEPS** is charted and graphed and presented at an IIP review meeting.

### **Conscious Discipline**

**Conscious Discipline** is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management program that empowers both teachers and students. Based on current brain research, child development information and developmentally appropriate practices, the goal of the program is to foster emotional intelligence of teachers first and children second. **Conscious Discipline** leads teachers, providers, schools, and programs through a process that promotes permanent behavior changes in both teachers and children. The change is from a traditional compliance model of discipline to a relationship-based, community model. The key is a sense of community. The "school family" is the core of the program. The school family is held together through communication skills. These skills are taught during conflict moments in the classroom and through active learning lessons. The goal of the school family is to create problem solvers. Love, expressed through safety, cooperation and respect, is the tool used to imbue the system with power. Both teachers and students are empowered to control themselves and to relate to others. Believing we must *first* change ourselves and model our expectations for others through self-control, creates a classroom climate and culture that teaches the following values:

- You are in charge. You can become the person you want to be.
- Power comes within.
- You are responsible for your feelings and actions. Your choices impact others.
- You must teach others how to treat you. You cannot expect them to magically "know."

- Conflict is a part of life. Mistakes offer opportunities to learn.
- Love is more powerful than fear. Cooperation is more effective than coercion.

### **Lunches and Snacks**

Children should eat breakfast before they arrive in the morning. Lunches must be sent with the children each day. Guidelines for nutritional lunches are sent home throughout the school year. Lunch is served each day between 11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Parents may join their child or children for lunch at any time.

Snacks, lunches and drinks are given to children at the table unless there is a special Rise activity. No food or drinks are to be consumed while children are in motion. Snacks are given mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Rise serves the following nutritional snacks: water, applesauce, graham crackers, Cheerios, Goldfish, fruit, and crackers, popcorn, raisins, pretzels, dried fruit, and some gluten free foods. Alternative snacks are sometimes used as part of the curriculum, often related to the weekly theme. A snack menu is posted in each classroom. Teachers will check for expiration dates before serving food and throw items out as needed (including expired items sent from home).

Parents need to communicate with teachers about any dietary or religious restrictions and/or allergies. Written approval from a physician or a registered/licensed dietician is required if a child must be served a therapeutic or special diet.

Snacks and lunches sent from home should follow guidelines both in nutritional value and safety. Parents of students who are in classrooms designated **peanut free** are requested not to send lunch or snack items containing peanut products.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parent meetings are held a minimum of twice a year with all parents to discuss student progress. Goals and objectives are reviewed and revised to reflect progress through the curriculum based on assessments. Parents are welcome to request additional meetings with the Teacher, Therapists, and/or Director at any time.

### **Confidentiality of Students Records**

A child's records are open only to the parent(s) or legal guardian, the Rise staff (including CMC personnel) and the Child Care Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Records will only be released to others with written authorization from the parent or legal guardian.

### **Public Awareness**

We are very proud of The YMCA Rise School and are happy to tour interested families, professionals, and supporters of the school. As part of our public awareness and fundraising activities, Rise also utilizes a variety of photographs, DVDs, and videotapes of the children and of the classes in accordance with written parental consent.

Tours of the Rise program will be held weekly for prospective parents and others interested in the program.

### **University Students**

The Rise mission reflects a partnership with higher education in the areas of teaching, service, and research. Affiliations with other institutions are important for achieving this mission. The Rise staff is pivotal in developing relationships with colleges and universities that benefit both groups. Often, university students assist in the classrooms and work directly with the children. Typically, practicum students and interns are enrolled in programs in education, human development and family studies,

speech/language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, music therapy, recreational rehabilitation, and medicine. The Director must approve any research project completed at Rise. The parents must authorize the participation of their child in any projects.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers may be utilized in your child's class to assist in the preparation and individualization of activities or in the office and in other aspects of the school. Some of these volunteers may be from the Community Service Programs at local high schools and universities. Parents are asked to volunteer a minimum of ten hours per year as part of their support of the Rise program. Parents may discuss volunteer opportunities with the Preschool Director, Development Director, or Parent Volunteer Coordinator.

**Background checks are conducted for all recurring volunteers.**

### **Visitors**

All visitors, except for individuals who are authorized to bring children to school and pick them up in the afternoon, must sign in and out in the Rise Office. Families are welcome visitors in the school at all times. Parents are encouraged to observe and volunteer at The Rise School as often as possible. Parents may visit The YMCA Rise School at any time during the day to observe their child, the school's operation, and program activities without having to secure prior approval.

# Logistics

## Calendar/Operating Hours

The YMCA Rise School's year-round calendar is aligned with the schedule of the local school systems to the extent possible. The calendar includes a total of ten weeks of break per year: one week in November, three weeks in December-January, one week in March, two weeks in May-June and three weeks in August. The projected days of operation for each year are supplied in advance to allow parents to plan alternative child-care options.

The hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday for children and 7:45 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. for staff. **In order for children to maximally benefit from the educational services, parents are strongly encouraged to bring their children no later than 8:45 a.m. each day.** The beginning of the day is valuable instructional time. When children are late to school, it affects the child and his/her educational program.

Parents are also requested to pick children up from school promptly between 2:20 and 2:30 so that teachers can utilize the full amount of planning and preparation time at the end of the school day. Staff is not available to care for children before 8:00 a.m. or after 2:30 p.m.

The staff works very hard to plan and prepare exciting and fun learning activities for the children. The staff also takes pride in the cleanliness of the facility. In order to accomplish these tasks, they must have adequate preparation time. Children who arrive before 8:00 a.m. should wait in the Gym with their parents.

## Arrival and Departure of Children

Children may not be dropped off for care in the classroom earlier than 8:00 a.m. and must be picked up between 2:20 and 2:30 p.m. In order for children to maximally benefit from the program's services, parents are *expected* to bring their children no later than 8:45 a.m. each day. The beginning of the day is valuable instructional time. When children are late to school, it affects the child and his/her educational program and enrollment within The Rise School and disrupts teaching time. If you arrive after 9:00 please refer to your teacher about her policy for entering the classroom. Parents are also requested to pick children up from school promptly by **2:30 p.m.** so teachers can utilize the full amount of planning and preparation time at the end of each school day. Children picked up after 2:35 will be charged late fees. For safety, children must never be left without direct transfer to an adult; therefore, children must always be brought directly to the classroom. Parents are asked to sign their child in and out each day.

Please wash your child's hands upon entering the classroom.

The children's rest time is between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. (the infant room is on a slightly different schedule). Out of respect for the other children, a child may not be dropped off after a classroom's lunchtime has started, 11 a.m., without special notice from a doctor or therapist.

They may reenter the classroom at 1:30 p.m. Please make the teacher or teacher assistant aware at arrival if your child will be leaving school during naptime so their belongings will be ready at pick up minimizing disruptions and possibly awakening the other children.

The *Authorization to Pick Up Form* must be completed prior to enrollment and in place by the child's first day of school. If emergency changes must be made, parents should phone the school office to inform the Rise staff and to allow them to prepare the child for the change in plans. For any individuals not listed on the authorization form, parents will need to furnish the Rise staff with the person's name, phone number, and driver's license number. This information will be verified when the individual arrives to pick up the child from school. Rise will make a copy of the person's driver's license and keep this on file. The child is released only to authorized persons with properly installed car seats, for safety and liability reasons.

During arrival and departure times, please park in the garage or use the **circle drive for 10-minute parking ONLY**. Please do not use the church parking spaces off Normandy.

### **Unscheduled Closings**

In case of severe weather, Rise will make a judgment call by 6 a.m. and notify parents and staff by phone and email. If the threat of inclement weather arises, parents should listen to local radio stations for school closings and times, be accessible, and make arrangements to pick up their child promptly. Any other unscheduled closings will be reported to parents as soon as possible through written notice or by telephone communication. Also, parents can call the school at 214-373-7473 and if there is a school closing, it will be on the recorder/answering machine.

# Enrollment

## Enrollment

Children are eligible for enrollment at the age of 6 months. The enrollment process begins with a tour of the school. Tours are scheduled by the Director between the hours of 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Parents are encouraged to bring their child with them for the tour. Following the tour a student inquiry form is completed. Children are enrolled depending on space availability. Any child under consideration for enrollment must be able to benefit from participation in a highly stimulating group setting. If space is unavailable, children are placed on the waiting list.

After parents are notified of an enrollment date, an application packet is completed, including a Health Professional Assessment with the immunization record, signed by a physician. **These records must be kept current and enrollment can only be maintained if due dates are met. If these records are allowed to expire, the child will be suspended from school until the records are updated.** Parents must sign a statement that they have received a copy of The Ashford Rise Family Handbook that contains the operating policies and procedures of the school including discipline and guidance policies. The Rise staff will conduct an intake screening of children prior to admission in order to establish areas of need and assist in the determination of appropriate placement. Any pertinent medical records, information regarding prior services, and outside evaluations (if appropriate) will be reviewed by the Rise team who will make a determination regarding admission to the program, or referral to other programs or agencies where appropriate.

## Tuition

Tuition is based on the full year program costs with 12 equal monthly installments with an additional 13<sup>th</sup> months tuition to be filled by fundraising. The first month's tuition is due on the first day of the month your child's program begins. Tuition is not reduced during school breaks, family vacations, schedule adjustments or absences unless special arrangements are approved. A monthly tuition is charged based on the annual program costs per child. Tuition is to be paid monthly, **due by the 1st of each month**. After the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, a **\$25.00 late fee will be charged with a \$5 daily fee until tuition is paid** unless otherwise arranged with the Director. Anytime a check is returned, you will be charged a \$25.00 fee from Rise. Your check will be immediately redeposited. Parents are requested to place tuition checks in the gray box in the Rise Office or hand directly to the Director or Office Manager.

In April/May, parents are required to pay their August tuition in advance to hold their child's placement slot for the next school year. This advanced payment is required so that prospective families on the waiting list can be provided sufficient notice of classroom spaces available.

**If payments are more than 15 days overdue, the child is subject to withdrawal from the program.**

## Financial Aid

Financial aid is available for those who qualify. This aid could provide financial assistance from 20% up to 80% of the regular tuition cost based on a family's household income and the number of persons living in the household. To apply for financial aid, a family must request the *Financial Aid Form*. The program is able to keep this information confidential, and after reviewing the information, families will be notified by the Director the amount of financial aid to be applied to the student's tuition. Children receiving financial aid are required to adhere to an attendance policy. Excessive unexcused absences can result in loss of the financial aid. All families that

currently receive financial assistance for tuition must reapply before the start of the upcoming school year.

### **Fundraising**

The YMCA Rise School is a non-profit organization supported through a combination of tuition and private fundraising. The school does not receive any government funding. Tuition comprises 40% of the funding required to operate the school. The remaining 60% is achieved from grants, corporate and individual donations. Rise sponsors several fundraising events each year including, Heart & Soul, and the parent lead Letter Writing Campaign and the Touchdown Club sponsors, Rise Round-up, Rise and Shine Fun Run, a golf tournament and cook-off. Please see the Development Director for questions regarding fundraising.

### **Termination of Services at Rise**

A child may be terminated from The YMCA Rise School if a pattern of disregard for the established policies and procedures is demonstrated by parents. A written notice will be provided to parents concerning the possibility of termination, followed by written notice of termination if the problem continues. Examples of reasons for termination include: (a) disregard of the school's operating hours and established policies and procedures; (b) failure to complete required forms; (c) disregard of the illness policy; (d) delinquent tuition payment; (e) extended absences that have not been explained and (f) one-on-one intensive treatment needs for the child.

# Licensing and Accreditation Requirements

## **Licensing**

The YMCA Rise School of Dallas is licensed by the Childcare Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Rise adheres to the *Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers* monitored by DFPS site visits. The most recent compliance report is posted in the main hallway of the school. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available for review by parents in the Director's Office. Parents are encouraged to contact DFPS with any questions or concerns regarding the minimum standards for licensing at (512) 834-3389, or visit the DFPS website at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>. The telephone number for the local Licensing Office is (214) 951-7902. To report child abuse or neglect, call the DFPS Abuse/Neglect Hotline at (800) 252-5400, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## **Accreditation**

In 2002, 2008, and 2013, The YMCA Rise School of Dallas is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This prestigious accreditation is earned by only nine percent of the schools applying nationwide.

## **Supervision**

The Ashford Rise School of Dallas maintains the highest level of quality by maintaining adult/child ratios that are maximally beneficial. The classrooms have the instructional support of one (1) teacher and two (2) teacher assistants. Additionally, there are therapists, approved volunteers, and university students who provide instruction and assistance in the classrooms to ensure that the children receive individual help, as needed.

*The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires the following to be stated:*

### **Gang Free Zone**

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of the preschool site location. The purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties

### **Discipline**

In compliance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self direction, which include at least the following:
  - Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;

- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

### **Vision and Hearing Screening**

Texas State Law requires that all children 4 years and older receive hearing and vision screenings. During the school year Rise will conduct the screenings at the school for children ages 3 and older at no cost to parents. If a child has already received a vision or hearing examination by a private provider, the parent is asked to provide a copy of the report to the school. If a child is unable to complete the screening at the school the parents will be required to have the screening completed by a physician and provide the school with the results.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting**

If a Rise staff member has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person, he/she is required by the Texas Family Code to make a report to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DPFS) via the Child Abuse Hotline. The DPFS child abuse hotline telephone number is 1-800-252-5400. If a staff member is accused of child abuse or neglect, the Director will file a report in accordance with the Texas Family Code. The staff member may be relieved of his/her duties pending an investigation.

In accordance with the Texas Family Code, if a report of abuse or neglect is made on a child by any person, Rise is required to provide DPFS with information they request without needing informed parental consent.

# Rise School Policies

## Dress

Parents are encouraged to dress their children in comfortable clothing and shoes each day. Daily activities include active and messy play. The children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about or being restricted by their clothing. **Sneakers or rubber soled shoes are best for sturdy footing. Please no flip flops or boots.** It is also requested that a change of clothes either be sent to school daily or kept at school in the child's cubby. Oversized tee shirts are worn by children during messy art activities to help protect clothing. During warm weather, please be mindful of open-toed to help prevent accidents and injuries.

## Health and Safety Procedures

The following health and safety procedures are followed at Rise:

- Fire drills are conducted monthly and severe weather drills conducted three times a year. Evacuation routes are posted in each of the classrooms.
- In the event of a building evacuation the children are re-located to the Unitarian Church across the Normandy on the south side of the building.
- All classrooms maintain a first aid kit.
- Children and staff wash their hands as often as necessary.
- Mouthed and handled objects/toys are washed and sanitized between uses by the children.
- Sinks used for multiple purposes are sanitized before food prep
- Diaper changing and toileting are performed in a separate area of the classroom. Latex gloves are always worn by staff when diapering or assisting children with toileting. Soiled diapers and clothing are kept in separate, closed containers. Changing tables are sterilized after each use. Handwashing sinks are not used for removing fecal matter. Latex-free gloves are used if a child is allergic to latex.
- All classroom materials such as washcloths, bibs, and etc. are washed after a single use by the children or staff.
- All electrical outlets at The YMCA Rise School of Dallas are covered.
- Instructional staff and the Director are certified in adult, child, and infant CPR and First Aid.

## Animal & Pet Policy

The presence of animals in Rise classrooms is discouraged and required approval by the director. If approval is granted, animals have to be in good health. Pets or visiting animals have to have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Program staff make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal. Hand washing must occur before and after handling any animal. Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk for salmonella infection.

## Water Play and Splashing Pools

Wading/splashing pools containing two feet of water or less will be:

- Stored out of children's reach when not in use;
  - Drained after each class use
  - Stored so they do not hold water.
  - A child may NOT participate if they have any sores that would be in the water
- Parent consent for use of wading/splashing pools obtained on the *Admission Information* form completed annually

### **Evacuation Procedures**

- In case of fire or danger of fire or explosion, the staff's first responsibility is to evacuate the children to a designated safe area.
- Emergency exit plans are posted in each classroom.
- Staff and students will exit the building in the same manner as for a fire drill and proceed to the Unitarian Church. If needed, parents will be called using cell phones to pick up their children.

### **Positive Behavioral Support/Discipline and Guidance Policy**

The Rise staff provides positive behavioral support and uses discipline measures that demonstrate kindness and compassion, but also firmness and consistency. Every attempt is made to help the child gain the confidence and knowledge that is needed to develop self-regulation. Children are not allowed to hurt themselves or others, or to destroy property.

Promoting positive behaviors in children is a primary goal in the classroom setting.

Guidelines for implementing this include:

1. Classroom rules are simple and geared toward the children's developmental level.
2. Teachers and teacher assistants serve as models of appropriate behaviors. Yelling at children and frequent use of the word "no" are not acceptable staff interactions with the children.
3. Children will be praised for following the rules and for modeling positive behaviors.
4. Children will be reminded of the rules and limits will be consistently enforced by the classroom staff.

Discipline and guidance of the children is consistent, based on an understanding of their individual needs and development and will include the following action:

1. Planned ignoring
2. Restitution
3. Redirecting
4. Time out
5. Discussion of behavior/conflict with the child or children involved, if appropriate.

Staff behaviors that are prohibited at Rise include:

1. Any type of physical or aversive punishment;
2. Withdrawal of food, nap, or bathroom opportunities;
3. Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, including yelling and belittling;
4. Any form of public or private humiliation; and
5. Any form of emotional abuse.

The YMCA Rise School of Dallas is in the process of implementing Conscious Discipline and will be sending home information throughout the year about the program.

# Parent Information

## Parent Meetings

The purposes of the meetings are for parents to support and network with each other, exchange valuable information, and to provide speakers and information on topics that are of interest to parents. An open house is held in September to provide additional information about the parent organization. Parent meetings are held on various days to accommodate full and part time student attendance and are typically held in the afternoons before pick up.

## Communication Between School and Home/Parent Notifications

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers regularly. Teachers will maintain portfolios for each child with monthly entries that can be reviewed by parents at any time. Friday Folders will go home every Friday with important notices from the classroom, teacher, or office and will also include artwork from the week. Teachers will notify parents, in writing, of significant or special events that are happening at Rise. Parents are encouraged to send notes to school concerning special events at home. Parents can leave messages with our office manager **(214-373-7473)**, which will be reviewed by the classroom teacher at noon and after 2:30 p.m. Calls will be returned after the children leave school each day. If parents have an emergency, the school office will get a message to the classroom. Parents are requested to schedule a conference time should they need to talk to teachers regarding their child's progress.

Communication with parents is of utmost importance to the Rise staff. Please check your child's cubby each day for notes from the teacher. All students receive weekly progress notes throughout the week either through the Brightwheel app or a note sent home each Friday. This update will provide information on events of the current week, events for the upcoming week and suggestions for home activities. Daily communication checklists are sent home to parents of children in the Yellow, Green, and Purple Rooms.

Please consult with your child's teacher whenever you have concerns or questions about your child or the program. If your concerns cannot be resolved, you should then consult the Director.

## Supplies/Personal Items

### **ALL PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND FOOD ITEMS MUST BE LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME**

Parents are responsible for sending the following:

1. The child's personal supplies including:
  - a. an extra change of clothing;
  - b. disposable diapers;
  - c. a blanket, security item from home;
  - d. other items as requested by classroom teacher.
2. The child's lunch/ bottles (if used) each day. Water is provided. Lunches are stored in bins outside of the classroom or cubbies in classrooms (ice packs are encouraged in lunch packs) and heated in microwave ovens. The program provides snacks, plates, cups, spoons, forks, and bibs.
3. Three times a year classroom supplies are requested. Parents will receive a supply list that will include housekeeping items such as paper towels, facial tissue, diaper wipes, Ziploc bags, etc.

## **Illnesses and Absences**

The family will be expected to notify the staff of any illnesses or circumstances indicating an absence. When a child comes to school, he or she should be well enough to participate in all activities. The children typically go outside for at least part of each day. Children who are not well enough to play outside should be kept at home until they can participate fully in the school day. Exclusion from the school will be based on the needs of the sick child and the other children in the classroom. In case of a communicable disease, and at the discretion of the Director, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children.

When the child arrives at school, the parents are asked to provide the following information to the teacher:

- If the child has not slept well the night before
- If the child's mood and/or demeanor is unusual
- If the child is not eating well
- If there is any change in routine/activities for the family at home which may have an impact on the child
- If there has been any signs of the symptoms as stated under Illness (see D below)
- If the child has been exposed to any communicable disease
- If the child is taking any medication

Please try to manage your children's illnesses promptly and with consideration for others in the classroom. Rise makes every attempt to practice good preventive measures such as careful hand washing and cleaning mouthed toys.

The following exclusion guidelines apply to Rise as recommended by the following institutions: American Academy of Pediatrics, Mayo Clinic, Center for Disease Control, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, National Institute of Health, and Children's Medical Center.

Children will not be admitted or readmitted to school if the following illnesses are present or have been present within the past twenty-four hours:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in school activities including outdoor play;
- The illness results in a greater need for care than teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care;
- The child has one of the following, unless written medical evaluation by a physician indicates that the child can be included in the school's activities:
  - (A) Oral or forehead scan of 100.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs of symptoms of illness;
  - (B) Rectal temperature of 101.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs of symptoms of illness;
  - (C) Armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs of symptoms of illness;
  - (D) Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as:
    - Diarrhea
    - Vomiting
    - Severe Cough
    - Listless, cranky or tired behavior
    - Undiagnosed skin bumps, rash, or breaking out on the skin
    - Sore throat, red throat, pustules on the back of the throat
    - Runny nose with yellow or green discharge

- Red or watery eyes, or eyes showing a yellow discharge
- Severely sore ears, or ears discharging fluid
- A physician has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

Parents will be notified if their child becomes ill at school and must make arrangements for picking up their sick child. Please understand that we do not have personnel for sick child care and due to the medical needs of some students, communicable illnesses put them at greater risk. We will separate your child from the group as best as possible to ensure that the illness will not spread to the best of our ability. A child that is sent home due to illness should remain at home for at least the following school day, and should not return until they are fever free for 24 hours without being on medication, and 24 hours without a vomiting or diarrhea episode, unless a clearance note is provided from the child's doctor.

Parents must supply home, work, and emergency phone numbers. Parents should notify the school of the times when (a) the child will be absent from school; and (b) the parents will not be at their regular address or phone number to ensure they may be reached at all times, not just in case of an emergency. The YMCA Rise School enforces the same standards in preventing employees from working while sick.

### **Nap Time**

Children are not required to sleep, but must rest for a time on their mats. Books and other quiet materials will be provided to children who do not sleep. However, teachers will not plan activities for children who do not sleep. For children 12 months and older a cot will be provided and students will bring a nap mat. The mat is to be taken home on Fridays to be washed and brought back the following week. Children in the Purple Room will use cribs and sheets will be provided. Children under 12 months may only sleep in a sleep sack, with no other items in the crib.

### **Medical Information**

Prior to admission of a child, parents will provide any pertinent medical records on the child. Prior to admission and **updated annually, the *Child Health Assessment Form* must be completed by a licensed health professional.** The *Child Health Assessment Form* provides the documentation of a physical examination and a record of your child's immunizations. Children requiring special medical procedures such as breathing treatments, catheterization and tube feeding, etc. will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine placement appropriateness, needs for staff training, nurse supervision and potential risks. If a child requires any special health procedures at school, such as food restrictions, orthotics, etc., parents will be required to have a *Special Health Care Procedures Form* completed and signed by the child's health care provider detailing this care.

Immunizations must be current before a child can be enrolled in school, or parents must provide Rise with an approved Texas Department of Health affidavit exempting their child from the state immunization requirements. Current vision and hearing screening results are required to be provided to the school on an annual basis for children four years or older. Vision and Hearing assessments are conducted at the school annual for those children.

Parents must sign emergency treatment releases. The release specifies the procedures that will be followed in case of a medical emergency. These procedures include:

- Notification of parents;

- Notification of individuals specified by parents if parent notification is impossible;
- Notification of emergency treatment services if indicated.

### **Medications**

As much as possible, medications should be given at home rather than school. Parents must complete and sign a medication sheet when it is necessary for a medication to be given at Rise. Parents must send the medication(s) each day with appropriate pharmacy labels attached. Non-prescription drugs must have the manufacturer's label attached, the child's name, and dosage amount from the physician and the time of dosage at school. For any over the counter medications, ointments, etc., a *Special Health Care Procedures*

*Form* must be completed and signed by the child's health care provider in order for those medications to be used at school. Medications will be secured in a locked cabinet out of reach of the children or in a locked refrigerator container. Medications will be given by the Director, teacher or teacher assistant with written permission from parents. The staff will document the date, time, route and dosage each time medication is administered.

### **Injury to a Student**

Children are under visual supervision by an adult at all times. Staff will be proactive in making sure that the areas occupied by children are free from preventable hazards. Staff will promptly intervene if children are observed engaging in unsafe play.

If a student is injured, the staff member(s) who witnessed the injury will assess the extent of the injury. If the injury is determined by the staff member to be minor, first aid will be administered and the child comforted. The teacher will notify the parent as soon as possible prior to pickup time.

Staff members administering first aid will wear plastic gloves if the injury involves broken skin, bleeding, and/or exposure to bodily fluid. If the staff member determines that the injury is serious and that professional help may be needed, the staff member will notify the Director, Educational Coordinator, and/or Office Manager immediately. The team will decide the appropriate action to take including calling the parent to take the child to the doctor or calling 911. A staff member is not permitted to transport an injured child home or to a medical facility.

If 911 is called, the caller will give the following information:

- Self-identification
- Identity of injured person and nature of injury
- Time of injury
- Location of injured child
- Pre-existing medical conditions or allergies to medications
- Current medications taken

If 911 is called following the above consultation, the parent will also be called immediately thereafter. A staff member will be selected to accompany the student in the ambulance if the student is taken from school to a medical facility for treatment. The parent will be notified of the medical facility destination. The student notebook will be taken to provide necessary information. The staff member will stay with the student at least until the parent has arrived. The Director or classroom teacher will follow-up with the parent regarding the status of the student's condition until the student returns to school.

### **Incident Report**

An incident report will be completed by the classroom teacher or by the person having knowledge of the facts when any accident, injury or significant event occurs. The report will be completed *within 24 hours* and will be filed in the child's records. Parents will be promptly notified of any occurrence of an accident or injury.

### **Field Trips**

Throughout the year, field trips may be scheduled, based on the curriculum and children's ages. You must provide written consent or permission for your child to participate. Children may not participate if written permission is not provided. All field trips are closely supervised. Since these excursions truly require a coordinated effort, parents will be needed to drive and help on field trips. Parents are invited and encouraged to help in the field trip activities, however, siblings under the age of 14 may not attend.

### **Relationship With Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Programs**

Rise welcomes and encourages collaboration with area ECI programs and private therapists. However, because the Rise schedule is structured and activity-based, Rise is unable to accommodate direct therapy visits during the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m (older children who do not nap may be seen during nap times). ECI therapists are always welcome to work with children and their parents after 2:30 p.m. and may observe the child at any time with parent consent. Special accommodations are considered.

### **Transition From One Rise Classroom to the Next**

The Rise school year begins the last week of August. At that time each class moves to the next level as a group unless an individual decision is made regarding a child's placement. The current teacher completes a Transition Book with specific information about each child to give to the receiving teacher. The student's portfolio and all records are sent along to the receiving teacher as well. Teachers also meet with former teachers for all children they will have in the upcoming year. During the summer months, children are sent to their next classroom for "transition visits" so familiarize themselves with the teachers and classroom.

### **Transition From Rise to Other School Settings**

Children who turn six prior to September 1st **must** transition from Rise to another school setting. A graduation ceremony and reception is held in July. Graduating students attend Rise until the August break. The Rise staff will facilitate transition to the next school setting by offering the following services:

- Provision of information regarding public school programs
- Provision of all Rise records and assessments to the receiving school with parent consent
- Parent education meetings
- Going with parents to observe the school
- Meeting with staff at the school
- Encouraging staff at the school to observe the child at Rise
- Attending Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) Special Education meetings
- Providing technical assistance to parents about the laws and regulations governing Special Education.

### **Odds and Ends**

- If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, the teacher should be notified a week in advance, so the party can be included in her weekly

plans for the class. Parents will be responsible for refreshments and for party decorations or party favors. **Please check with the teacher about allergies and intolerances when providing the refreshments.** Keep in mind—healthy snacks are encouraged! The health department requires all foods to be from a commercial certified kitchen. *Please, no gift giving.*

- Personal toys should not be brought to school unless it is a designated “share” day. After sharing toys must be kept in the children’s cubbies.
- If your child has a specific blanket, pillow, etc., that is absolutely required for nap/rest, please let the teacher know so that it can be kept at school during the day. Children are not required to sleep, but must rest for a time on their mats.
- Please call the school and leave a message if your child is going to be absent.
- If you have a change in address, telephone number, employment, emergency numbers or family situation, the information should be provided promptly to your child’s teacher and the office manager.
- The YMCA Rise School of Dallas Family Directory was developed for families of the school only. The information is not to be shared with others not attending The Rise School or used for purposes beyond the normal scope of the school/home partnership (parent meetings, birthday parties, parent reminders etc.).
- No child should ever be left unattended in an automobile.
- Siblings who come to school as Rise students are dropped off or picked up are to remain with the parent at all times. Staff cannot be responsible for siblings.
- Children will not be released if there is not a properly installed car seat in the vehicle they will be traveling in.
- The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) requires parents be notified of unsafe children’s products issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC). A list of these items can be found in the *Keeping Children Safe* notebook located in the Director’s office.

### **Parent Input, Suggestions, and Concerns**

Parent input and feedback are always welcome. Parents are requested to review and discuss with the Director and teachers any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of the school. An anonymous parent survey is sent to all parents each Spring asking them to evaluate the program and make suggestions. Every effort is made to accommodate parent requests.