



# *Rockford Lutheran Academy*

## **Parent Handbook 2019-2020**

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*Rockford Lutheran Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at this school. Rockford Lutheran Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration to their educational policies, admission policies, and, scholarships.*

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***Rockford Lutheran School - the provider of an exceptional college preparatory education in a challenging and inspiring Christian environment.***

**Failure to read this handbook does not excuse students from the rules and procedures described herein. Personal factors or contradictory advice from any source are not acceptable grounds for seeking exemptions from these rules and procedures.**

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## **Philosophy**

Rockford Lutheran Academy (RLA) is a community of faith where we believe that each child is a unique creation of God, blessed with a special set of talents and gifts. Each child deserves to approach life with a sense of self-worth and respect for others while developing a sense of one's own personal relationship with God. We feel that each child deserves the opportunity to develop his or her God-given potential to the fullest. We guide each child toward the fulfillment of this potential, in all areas of the child's life: spiritual, intellectual, social, psychological, and physical. We enrich and deepen each student's faith by promoting self-esteem, self-discipline, academic skills, Biblical knowledge, and Christian values.

In order to allow each child to develop to their fullest, RLA offers numerous enrichment classes during the school day and many after-school clubs, activities and sports. Students are encouraged to be involved with numerous activities. RLA uses personalized education to meet all students where they are and help them advance as much as possible. Programs such as Project Lead the Way help to instill 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in all students.

Rockford Lutheran affirms that parents are the first and primary educators of their children. Rockford Lutheran understands and embraces "in loco parentis," recognizing that we are responsible for the children entrusted to our care. Through a spirit of understanding and cooperation, we hope to create an atmosphere in which teachers, students, and parents can join together with the total faith community to come alive, to grow, and to learn.

As a Lutheran school, we hope to influence students and families to be dynamic agents of change in society in the areas of social and racial justice, human dignity, freedom, and peace. We provide an environment that fosters a belief in the sacredness of the human person and awareness that we are born into one worldwide human family.

At Rockford Lutheran, we create an atmosphere for learning that combines structure and creativity while fostering an enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Toward this end, we strive to maintain a joyous, happy environment, which promotes love, understanding, and acceptance of self and others.

Rockford Lutheran embraces the following core values:

### **Christ-Centered**

Our faith and trust in God and His Grace serves as the foundation of our ministry and is reflected in our teaching, relationships, and service.

### **Excellence**

We strive for excellence in education and promote our God given potential.

### **Service**

We inspire students to serve others reflecting Christ in our lives.

### **Harmony**

Diversity brings strength to our Lutheran family. All people are valued and welcomed.

## **Academics**

**ACADEMIC GRADING KEY** Grades are given for both academic achievement and effort.

The following grading keys are used in Grades 3 through 5.

GRADING KEY	Grading Key with Rounding
100 A+	99.5+ A+
94-99A	93.5-99.4 A
92-93 A-	91.5-93.4 A-
90-91 B+	89.5-91.4 B+
85-89 B	84.5-89.4 B
83-84 B-	82.5-84.4 B-
81-82 C+	80.5-82.4 C+
76-80 C	75.5-80.4 C
74-75 C-	73.5-75.4 C-
72-73 D+	71.5-73.4 D+
67-71 D	66.5-71.4 D
65-66 D-	64.5-66.4 D-

- Preschool teachers use an assessment system to evaluate student progress and communicate that progress with parents.
- Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers do not assign letter grades on report cards. Instead a system of codes and comments is used to give parents a more complete view of their student's progress, addressing numerous objectives and standards for each subject area.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a reinforcement and/or extension of materials and skills covered in the classroom. As reinforcement, assignments should cover skills previously taught and which are understood by the majority of the class. As extensions, long-term projects such as compositions, book reports, research projects, and oral presentations may be assigned.

Parents can help the school build good patterns of homework by:

- ***Being a stage manager*** – Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to work and that the needed materials are available.
- ***Being a motivator*** – Be positive about your child's completion of homework.
- ***Being a role model*** – If your child is reading, you can read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook. Demonstrate a practical application of the skills the children are learning.
- ***Being a monitor*** – If your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.
- ***Being a mentor*** – Play a role in homework if the teacher asks, but be aware that over-involvement can be a bad thing. If you have a question about the amount of homework, talk to the teacher on the next day, if possible.

## **MISSING WORK**

Teachers give exact due dates for each assignment. Each teacher is responsible for classroom policies and procedures regarding late and missing work, so these policies may vary between grade levels. These policies will be communicated with students and families. Any questions about late or missing work should be directed to the appropriate teacher.

## **PROMOTION & RETENTION**

Since most schools group children under a grade classification system, advancement of pupils is done on an annual basis. Annual promotion usually indicates achievement of minimum grade level expectations. Retention will be made only after consideration of the parent, the teacher, and the administration. Summer school can be mandated with the approval of the principal. Parents will be informed about the possibility of retention by the end of the third quarter. A final retention decision will be made in a timely manner.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

The MAP Measure of Academic Progress is administered to all students in grades 1–5 three times a year: fall, winter and spring. The MAP test scores, Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments, and Student Readiness tests are used to group students each fall and to measure short-term skill development. A permanent record of the scores is placed in each student's cumulative record folder. Parents will receive a printed explanation of their child's scores. If you have a question about your child's test score or academic progress, please contact your child's teacher or the principal. Testing in subject areas indicates student progress and is an important means of communication between home and school. Parents are asked to review student's tests when they are sent home.

## **Attendance**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance, punctuality, and participation in classes are necessary for success at Rockford Lutheran and to reach individual and program goals. Since learning is cumulative, it is essential that each child attend school regularly. Attendance records are maintained and forwarded to parents. Rockford Lutheran Academy complies with the State Board of Education policies regarding truancy. Frequent or lengthy absences not only deprive the child of learning opportunities but may lead to a reduction in grades and influence eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

- Students whose attendance falls below 75%, through either excused or unexcused absences may be held at the same grade level during the following school year. Parents of students affected by this policy will need to meet with the principal to determine if the student will be promoted to the next grade.
- A note regarding a student leaving and returning during the day (doctor's appointment, etc.) should be sent to the office. Upon the student's return from such an appointment, he/she must check in at the office and get a

“permit-to-class” slip. Parents must always come into the school and sign the student in or out when arriving or departing between 8:00 am and 3:00 pm.

- If the student is unable to attend, it is the parent or guardian’s responsibility to contact the school by 8:00 AM and give the reason. The Rockford Lutheran Academy’s telephone number is (815) 226-4947.

### **MAKE UP WORK**

- When calling the office to notify of an absence, parents should request any make up work and advise the office as to whether the work is to be picked up in the office or sent home with a sibling or neighbor.
- **VACATIONS:** When students are going to be absent from school for vacations for more than 2 days, homework assignments will be given at the discretion of your child’s teacher. Actual assignments may change during the absence.

### **TARDINESS**

- A tardy is defined as not being in the classroom at the beginning of the school day.
- Classroom management and instruction begins immediately at the beginning of the day. Therefore, students who are late disrupt the educational process for the child, the teacher and the entire class. Late students may miss directions, announcements, instruction, activities and more. Taking time to bring the tardy student to level with the class can take away from crucial class time. The student may also be embarrassed by entering class late. With all of this in mind, it is crucial that students be present by the beginning of each school day.
- It is the responsibility of the parent and the student to be at school by the beginning of each school day. The student and parent should be ready to leave home in a timely fashion so that additional traffic or other situations do not cause tardiness.
- No child will be allowed to be continually late, therefore the following procedures apply for all students in grades K-5:
  - Any student who is tardy 3 days of school will receive communication detailing the concerns so that parents can take appropriate measures ensuring the student is on time for school.
  - If a child is tardy for 6 days of school, the Principal will contact the parents.
  - A child who accumulates 10 tardies will not be allowed to attend school until the parents meet with the Principal to design a plan for attendance and will sign a contract ensuring that the student will be at school on time.
  - A child who accumulates 15 tardies will not be allowed to attend school until the parents meet with the Principal to review the plan and contract.
  - A child who accumulates 20 or more tardies may not be allowed to continue as a student at RLA.
  - This process will start over at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters.
- Certain tardies will be excused, such as those caused by inclement weather or specific emergency situations. The Principal alone has the authority to excuse tardies.

## **Athletics/Activities**

### **ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY**

All student athletes are created by God with unique talents and abilities. The goal at Rockford Lutheran is to create an environment where these abilities can be nurtured and developed to give glory to God. Along with instruction in skills specific to each individual sport, coaches will strive to instill the importance of each team member's contribution to the whole, and life skills of cooperation, sportsmanship, and the value of positive attitude. With this in mind, the following are basic tenets of the RLA Athletic Philosophy:

*Our athletes will strive toward Godliness of character. In their actions on and off the field of competition, they will try to reflect the nature of God. When we compete, we hope to show Christ to our opponents in our words and actions.*



Student athletes are just that - student athletes. Their performance in the classroom is of primary importance. Schoolwork must come first.

- *In reflecting Christ to others, coaches and athletes will practice good sportsmanship, regardless of the outcome of the contest.*
- *Fundamentals will be stressed at every opportunity. We want to have teams where the beginning athlete as well as the more experienced will feel motivated and challenged to learn and develop their skills. Everyone contributes to the team.*

Everyone, who desires to play on a RLA team, is welcome to play, provided they meet the academic eligibility rules. Currently, the following programs are offered directly through RLA or through the noted entity.

- Fall Sports: Co-Ed Soccer at RLA (grades 3-5)  
Football through the Renegades program (ages 5 and up)  
Cheerleading (Football season) through the Renegades program (ages 5 and up)  
Girls Volleyball (grades 4 & 5) with Alpine Academy
- Winter Sports: 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade Basketball (RLA teams for both girls and boys) through Art Sadler  
Basketball through Upward Sports (grades K-3)  
Cheerleading at RLA (grades 3-5)
- Spring Sports: Track and Field at RLA (grades 4-5)

Coaches are volunteers. They do their best to create a fantastic environment and experience for the student-athletes. Coaches have the responsibility of making all coaching decisions, including playing time.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

- All student athletes must be passing all subjects to be eligible to play on RLA teams.
- A student athlete who is failing one or more subjects will be termed ineligible for one week.
- Eligibility will be checked each Thursday. Ineligibility will run Monday through the following Sunday.
- The Principal or Athletic Director will check eligibility with the classroom teachers.
- The Principal or Athletic Director will notify each coach and the athlete and parents if any athlete is ineligible.
- Any student athlete who is ineligible for three consecutive weeks will be dismissed from the team to concentrate on his/her studies.

## **Financial**

### **TUITION**

Tuition is assessed according to the published schedule. When several students from one family attend at the same time, the tuition for the subsequent children is reduced according to the published schedule. Parents or guardians are responsible for the tuition of any grading period in which the student is enrolled. The customer agrees to pay the full semester of tuition when a student withdraws or is dismissed for any reason at any time during the semester. The customer also agrees to pay all legal costs and collection fees incurred by Rockford Lutheran School in collection of amounts owed by the customer.

### **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Tuition payments can be sent to the Business Office at 3411 North Alpine Road, Rockford, IL 61114, or may be submitted to the RLA office. Tuition may be paid all at once, by the semester, or in ten equal monthly installments. Tuition and fees may also be paid via automatic withdrawal. This can be set up with the business office. Parents must select a payment schedule at the time of registration but can revise the payment plan during the school year. On the ten-month plan, payments begin August 1 and end May 1. MasterCard and Discover credit cards are accepted for tuition and fee payments in the business office. A 2 ½% convenience fee will be charged on all credit card transactions related to tuition and fee payments. Tuition can also be paid online through the Rockford Lutheran website and the "QuickPay" program.

### **PAYMENT PROBLEMS**

If financial problems arise during the year, speak to the Finance Director. Any account balance due and not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will be subject to a 2% late fee.

Students will be denied admittance to school if an account balance becomes over 60 days past due. To be readmitted, the tuition account must be made current. Any tuition delinquent from the first semester of the school year must be resolved prior to the start of the second semester or the following year, respectively. The student may not be allowed to attend school until obligations have been met. Report cards will be held for tuition accounts that are over 30 days in arrears or Mealtime accounts that have a negative balance.

Checks returned by the bank as Non-Sufficient Funds or from closed accounts will be required to be paid by cash, money order or cashier's check. If a second check is returned, all future payments will be required to be made by cash, money order or cashier's check. A fee of \$25 will be added to the account.

Student enrollment fees and prior account balances must be paid in full prior to the first day of the new school year. All tuition and fees must be satisfied prior to graduation. No grades or transcripts will be issued until all monies are paid.

## **BOARD FINANCIAL POLICIES**

The following policies related to tuition and payments have been established by the Governing Board.

- If a student is dismissed for failure to comply with the discipline/academic standards of the school, NO refund shall be granted.
- All fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.
- The school shall withhold transcripts, grades and other enrollment documents until tuition, fees and assessments are paid in full.
- A child shall not be permitted to enroll for subsequent school years until all prior tuition, fees and assessments are paid in full.
- Once tuition accounts become over 60 days in arrears, students will be denied admittance.
- Tuition does not cover the entire cost to educate a student. Students and parents are encouraged to participate in volunteer activities.

## **General / Other**

### **ASSESSMENT for ACCEPTANCE**

Every student that applies for admission to RLA goes through an assessment/screening process. This process includes the student meeting with a grade level teacher to determine academic and social/emotional readiness. The principal or his designee may also review previous school records, IEPs or any other pertinent documents. If appropriate, further assessment may be completed by another RLA faculty member. A parent meeting may also be required if concerns exist. RLA will do everything possible to serve students of varying academic abilities but reserves the right to deny enrollment based on academic or behavioral concerns.

### **ASSOCIATION**

The following Association congregations serve as owners/operators of the Lutheran School Association:  
(All located in Rockford/Park area unless otherwise noted)

Alpine Lutheran Church  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
Calvary Lutheran Church  
Christ Lutheran Church  
Christ the Rock Lutheran Church  
Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church  
Concordia Lutheran Church  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
First Lutheran Church  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
Grace Lutheran Church  
GPS Faith Community  
Immanuel Lutheran Church-Belvidere

Immanuel Lutheran Church-Freeport  
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
Mount Olive Lutheran Church  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
St. Andrew Lutheran Church  
St. Mark Lutheran Church  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Salem Lutheran Church  
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church  
Tabor Lutheran Church  
United Lutheran Church  
Zion Lutheran Church

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Rockford Lutheran School is a community based, not-for-profit Illinois Corporation. The function of the Board of Directors is to establish the basic policies for the operation and management of Rockford Lutheran School. Twenty-five Associated Lutheran Churches are given the opportunity for representation on the Board of Directors. Annually, nine to twelve members are voted to serve on the Board. Up to four of these board members can belong to a church outside of the Associated Lutheran Churches. Each Board member voted into office serves a three-year term and cannot serve more than 3 three-year consecutive terms.

### **CELL PHONES**

We recognize that some students have cell phones and that parents choose to communicate with their children through such cell phones. Cell phones can create a distraction during academic and social settings. Therefore, students should have their cell phones turned off and stored in a bag or locker during the school day. Cell phones should not be used during the Fun & Friends Extended Care Program except from 3:00 PM to 3:10 PM, giving students an opportunity to check their phones for any messages from parents. Students using a cell phone at any other time will result in the cell phone being taken away. The cell phone must be picked up by the parents. Should there be a need to talk with a child, parents can call the office and leave message with the secretary. This policy applies to any and all communication devices, including smart watches.

### **CHAPEL/BIBLICAL STUDIES**

The Bible is taught daily in all grades at the school. Chapel is held for grades 1-5 on all Thursdays (except the week of the first Wednesday of the month) from 8:15-8:50AM. An early childhood chapel (preschool and kindergarten students) is held on all Wednesdays from 8:15-8:40 AM. On the first Wednesday of each month, all students will join together for chapel from 8:15-8:50 AM. Chapel includes singing, special music and a short homily. Chapels are led by Rockford Lutheran employees and area pastors. Parents, grandparents, and guests are welcome. All students are required to participate in Bible instruction and chapel.

### **CLASS PLACEMENT**

Towards the end of the school year, grade level teachers work together to place students in classes for the following academic year based on a variety of criteria, such as:

- Academic level
- Personalities of students in the class
- Personalities of the teacher
- Student's unique needs
- Gender
- Balancing class size

It is the belief of the administration that the teachers as a grade level team are best qualified to determine placement by weighing all the varying factors that they have observed over the past school year. Parents can make requests in writing to the Principal for placement with a specific teacher if they feel there is a strong academic or other reason which will promote student success. RLA does not promise to grant such requests. Requests should not be made based on social reasons as friendships are not a criteria for class placement.

Class placement will be announced as soon as it is educational prudent to do so.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**



The RLA teachers and administration communicate with parents through numerous means:

- Weekly newsletter/notes from teachers – Teachers frequently send home information with the students. Please check your child’s folder daily for any information being sent home.
- Electronic Newsletter – A newsletter specific to RLA is completed every two weeks and emailed to parents/guardians.
- Facebook – Every class or grade level has a closed Facebook group. The teachers will invite parents/guardians to be a part of this group.
- Emails – The teachers and administration will at times send information to parents via email. Please check your email regularly.
- Other electronic tools – Teachers sometimes use text or other apps to communicate with parents. Your child’s teacher will tell you about these tools.

All of these forms of communication will share pertinent topics, class activities, important dates, upcoming events, parenting suggestions, and much more.

### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT & DRILLS**

RLA has detailed procedures for numerous different emergency situations. Each of these procedures will be practiced at different times of the school year through emergency drills. The following codes are used:

- Code Blue – Safe Shelter – used for tornado or other weather emergencies.
- Code Green – Evacuation – used in case of fire or other situations where exiting the building is needed.
- Code Black – Fast evacuation – can be used for active violence or other threat where exiting the building fast is required.
- Code Yellow – Soft lockdown – used in an unknown but uneasy situation. Students stay in the rooms and instruction continues with safety precautions in place.
- Code Red – Hard lockdown – can be used when danger on campus. Rooms and students are secured.

Teachers and staff review procedures and are prepared to take steps to keep students safe. Exit routes are posted near the doors in the classrooms.

Bus Emergency Exit drills are also conducted annually.

### **CUSTODY OF MINORS**

In order to assure the safety of students, organizations, agencies, or other persons may assume custody of a student on school premises during school hours or immediately before or after school only on the explicit authorization of the parent. All persons including police officers must check into the office and show identification and cause. The Principal or his designee must be informed and be present during any conference between a police and other state child welfare official.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS**

RLA does not allow parents or students to distribute items such as invitations to birthday parties and special events at school, even if the invitation is for the entire class or grade. Parents are encouraged to send such things to parents directly. Classmates’ addresses can be obtained through Skyward. Please contact the school office for more information.

### **DOGS & PETS**

For safety reasons, no dogs or other pets are allowed on the RLA campus (outside of vehicles) when students are present unless prior approval is granted by the administration. Certified service or therapy animals may be preapproved by administration on a case by case basis.

### **DROP OFF / PICK UP / PARKING**

Safety is the number one priority and guides all decisions regarding drop off, pick up, car line, etc. To achieve the highest level of safety, please keep these points in mind:

- Parking on campus should only be done in marked spots. Never park somewhere that is not specifically marked as a spot.
- There is only one car line which is the only place to drop off your student. No students should be dropped off in any other place. The principal determines the car line route and procedures and will communicate these to all parents. Parents are responsible for communicating car line and drop off/pick up procedures with all others who might assist students in this manner.
- Never get out of your car in car-line. Always park if you need to get out of your car.
- When dropping off, please have your child ready to get out. It should not take 20 or more seconds after you stop for the car door to open. If you need that much time to make sure your child is ready for the day, then please park and walk them in.

- Students may only be picked up by pre-approved people. Parents are asked to submit a list of people with whom their student may leave before the school year starts. People may be added or removed from this list by contacting the school office. Only people on the list may pick up a student from school or from after-care.

Exact procedures for drop off, pick up and car line will be communicated with parents before the beginning of the school year and whenever necessary.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Opportunities are provided for educational field trips during a student's enrollment. Trips are carefully planned and supervised to provide an enjoyable experience along with educational value. Teachers at RLA frequently use trips to community parks and museums to supplement unit-learning experiences. Other grades use Rockford museums and parks as well as Madison, Chicago, and Milwaukee museums and zoos. A permission form must always be signed and returned by the parent in order for the student to attend the field trip. Field trips provide awesome hands-on learning opportunities. Sometimes opportunities arise that we have no control over in terms of scheduling, but we attempt to have at least three weeks between field trips. The number of field trips varies on the grade level and some field trips are for more than one grade level. Students may be taken off campus for school events (with a permission form being signed), but these are not considered field trips, i.e. the fourth grade play at a local theater.

For many trips, teachers will use a bus to transport the students. It is appropriate for some trips to use parent drivers. Parents who volunteer to drive for a trip are required to have a minimum of 100,000/300,000-liability insurance coverage. Parents that are driving on field trips will have to make a copy of their driver's license and their insurance card to turn in to the school office. The information will be kept on file for the entire school year. If a parent driver has an accident, their insurance company is responsible. The school's insurance is responsible for whatever the parent's insurance does not cover. All parent drivers are asked to refrain from all cell phone use and drive directly to their locations and back. Seat belts are mandatory for each student. In addition, younger students that are required by law to use car seats must be followed. Siblings are not to be taken on field trips when parents serve as chaperones unless approved by the principal. All drivers are considered chaperones.

## **FLAG SALUTE**

Each morning, school begins with the Pledge to American Flag and the Pledge to Christian Flag. The two pledges are listed below so parents can practice them with their children.

### **Pledge to Christian Flag**

*I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose kingdom  
It stands. One Savior, crucified, risen and coming again with life everlasting  
for all who believe.*

### **Pledge to American Flag**

*I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one  
nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

## **HALLWAYS**

- The time before school is important for teachers to prepare for the day's activities. Students and parents are not allowed to be in the hallways before 7:45 AM, unless going to Before Care prior to 7:45 AM. After students enter classrooms at 7:45 AM it is important for teachers to be able to supervise students. Parents need to make an appointment to speak with teachers. For the safety of the students, with the congested hallways no parents are to congregate in the halls before school. Parents are requested to respect teachers' need to begin class promptly at 8:00 AM and therefore be out of the hallways prior to that time.
- Classes meet until 3:00 PM. Parents are requested to remain out of the halls until that time. It is distracting to the students and the teacher to have parents standing outside the classroom prior to dismissal time.

## **LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS**

No student is allowed to leave the grounds during school hours without explicit written permission from his/her parents through the school office.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

A collection of lost items is kept in the lunchroom. Students and/or parents searching for a missing item may look through the lost and found at any time. Students who find lost articles are asked to take them to the office. Lost and Found unclaimed articles will be given to a not-for-profit organization at different times during the year.

## **LUNCHROOM / KITCHEN SAFETY**

RLA is blessed with a lunchroom space and hot lunch program. Students eating hot lunch will carefully go through the lunch line and be served by RLA staff. They will proceed to a check out station where RLA staff will place appropriate charges into the mealtime software. RLA abides by Illinois State Health Standards and has regular inspections of the kitchen facility. For health reasons no one is allowed in the kitchen other than kitchen staff. No microwaves are available for student use, so students who bring a lunch will not be able to heat any foods.

## **OUTSIDE RECESS**

RLA provides at least one break a day for students in the form of a recess. Normally during recess, students will play on the school playground and on the green spaces to the east and west of the playground. If the playground is wet and unsuitable for use, recess play might be limited to “black top only” which means students will play in the parking lot on the east end of the campus. Precautions will be taken to make sure that vehicles do not enter this area during recess and that students are safe. At times, it is appropriate to have indoor recess. The following conditions will result in indoor recess:

- The air temperature and/or wind chill is below 15 degrees F.
- The air temperature or heat index is above 100 degrees F.
- Precipitation is currently falling or there is lightning in the area.
- The playground or black top area is considered unsafe or unsuitable for student use at the time.

It is the parent’s responsibility to send the student to school with appropriate outdoor clothing.

## **PARENT CONCERNS**

If parents have any concerns over how their child was treated by another child, please contact the school as soon as possible. Please realize that it is crucial to first talk to the person responsible for supervising the students when the incident occurred. If it was in the classroom, the parent should talk to the teacher. If it was at recess, the parent will be directed to the recess supervisors. You are always invited to address the principal regarding such matters, but the principal may request that you speak to the person supervising at the time.

## **PARENT’S RIGHTS**

Rockford Lutheran Academy follows the Congressional Buckley Amendment in regard to the rights of non-custodial parents. Non-custodial parents may request to have the newsletter mailed to them. They may also request parent teacher conferences and copies of each report card. Parents who have obtained special court orders in regard to the custody of their children are requested to give the school copies of that portion of the divorce, separation, or custodial court order.

## **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

- Inform the office immediately if you have a change of address, telephone number and/or email.
- Skyward, the school information system, contains information that parents can access. Parents can update person information on Skyward at any time.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Emergency School closing information will be communicated via email and local television stations. Our Skyward system allows us to send voicemail and text messages to telephone numbers on file. Please ensure that this information is accurate and appropriate.

## **SCHOOL COLORS / MASCOT**

RLA's school colors are purple and white. The mascot is a Crusader.

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The RLA school day begins at 8 AM for all students.

The dismissal times for students vary depending on age. The preschool students will dismiss at 2:50 from the preschool building. The kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students will dismiss at 2:55 from the gym door. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will be dismissed at 3:00 pm from the main RLA entrance. The 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are dismissed at 3:00 from their classrooms, but go to their lockers downstairs before exiting the building, so they are coming outside from the east end doors of the elementary building around 3:05.

## **SEARCHES**

The furnishing of cubbies, desks, facilities or space owned by the school does not give rise to an expectation of student privacy with regard to student use of those cubbies, desks, facilities or space.

Individual lockers, desks and other school property may be searched any time a school official has reasonable suspicion that a criminal offense or violation of a school rule has occurred. School officials may also conduct periodic inspections of all school lockers, desks or other school property or a randomly selected portion of any of these. School maintenance staff may also open a locker to conduct maintenance or to check for needed maintenance. All searches, inspections and maintenance may be done without prior notice and without the presence of the student. All searches, inspections and maintenance may only occur with the authorization and direction of the building principal. Searches other than maintenance inspections, must be done in the presence of at least two staff members.

In cases of searches based upon reasonable suspicion of a violation, the student will be notified as soon as practical after the search occurred, the reason for the search and the result of the search. Searches of individuals or their personal property shall be based on reasonable suspicion and shall occur only with the authorization and direction of the building principal and in the presence of least one other staff member.

### **SIGN IN AT OFFICE**

For security reasons everyone entering the building must stop by the office, sign in and wear a visitor lanyard, if it is between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM. We appreciate the parents' cooperation with this security measure.

### **SMOKE FREE CAMPUS**

No smoking is allowed on the school premises at anytime - indoors or outdoors.

### **STUDENT EARLY DISMISSAL**

Teachers or staff will not dismiss or excuse any child earlier than the school hours without a written request, email, or phone call to the office from the parent or guardian nor will they permit any child to leave with anyone other than those individuals on the pick-up list with the front office unless written notification, email, or phone call to the office has been given indicating so. This policy is designed to protect the child.

It is imperative that students are in class. Parents are encouraged to keep early dismissals to a minimum. If a student has more than five early dismissals in a semester, the Principal will communicate with parents to reduce or eliminate early dismissals.

### **STUDENT MESSAGES**

Messages will be taken and passed on to students as needed. If you need to reach your student because of an emergency, please call our school office at (815) 226-4947.

### **STUDENTS ENTERING THE SCHOOL**

Students who arrive in the morning between 6:30 and 7:30 AM must attend Fun & Friends Before-School Care. When students are dropped off at this time, they should go directly to Fun & Friends and sign in. Students arriving between 7:30 and 7:45 AM should wait outside. In the case of inclement or cold weather, students will be allowed to enter the lobby between 7:30 and 7:45 where they will remain until the 7:45 bell rings, allowing them to go to the classrooms.

### **TELEPHONE USE**

At times students may need to contact their parents and may do so using the phone in the school office. We limit phone use to needs, not wants. Calling a parent to ask them to bring a needed item is acceptable. Calling a parent to arrange afterschool plans because a student wants to go home with someone else is not.

### **USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE**

The safety of students is the ultimate priority for RLA. At times, it is necessary to use physical force with a student to keep that student safe. Physical force is always a last resort. RLA strictly forbids all type of corporal punishment. If an RLA employee determines that a student is in immediate danger, the RLA employee may immediately use physical force to protect that student. For example, if a student is attempting to hurt themselves or another student, physical force can immediately be used to restrain the student.

When immediate danger is not present, verbal directions should be used prior to any use of physical force.

- Verbal directions should be given to the student to achieve a state of safety.
- Verbal directions should be given with utmost care and should be clear and concise and only sufficient to move toward a state of safety.
- If the student refuses to respond positively to the verbal directions and the situation allows, RLA personnel should announce a reward or consequence for not following the verbal directions and give the student another opportunity to comply.

- If the student is unable to comply or still refuses to do so and the situation allows, the RLA personnel shall state that they are about to use physical force with the student. For example, a student who leaves class and refuses to return to a safe environment should be told something of this nature: “You need to safely return to the classroom or I will pick you up and take you back to the classroom or office.”
- If the student is unable to comply or still refuses, physical force can be used as stated to the student.
- RLA personnel shall keep a record of any time physical force is used with a student. A parent or guardian will be contacted whenever physical force is used with a student. This contact will be made as soon as possible and must be made prior to the end of the school day.

## **VISITORS**

Rockford Lutheran Academy welcomes parents and other individuals to visit and participate in school activities and business. The support and cooperation received from visitors is essential to the safety and success of the school. Because the protection of our students is of utmost importance, the school has established guidelines for campus visitors. These guidelines apply to our school building during normal school hours on normal school days. They do not apply to special events outside of the normal school day. In special circumstances, the school may make discretionary changes to these guidelines to ensure a reasonable level of campus security. This policy applies to all volunteers as well.

Definition of Visitor: A visitor is defined as any person who is not an RLA student or school employee.

### Guidelines:

- All visitors to campus, including all parents and relatives, must check in at the school office immediately upon arrival. Visitors must sign in and may be asked for identification (driver’s license). During school hours, visitors may only enter and exit through the main school entrance which features the black canopy and is by the school offices.
- All visitors will receive a temporary visitor badge that must be worn in a visible location while on campus. This badge must be returned to the school office upon sign-out.
- Visitors desiring to interact with a student(s) must be on the approved visitation list completed by the legal parent or guardian. In cases of divided custody, the person responsible for educational decisions for the child can complete the list. If that is both parents, two lists would be completed. Guests on specific lists would only be allowed to visit on days when that parent is responsible for picking up the student.
- Visitors who join a student for lunch are expected to leave after lunch is finished so the class may continue to the next planned activity. Visitors who join a student for chapel or an assembly are expected to leave after that event. Visitors interacting with students should not walk the student back to the classroom.
- Visitors are not to be on the playground with students during recess or P.E. times.
- Some visitors are potential students and their family members who are touring or shadowing with an RLA student. Arrangements for this are made in advance with the admissions office.
- Visitors who want to visit a classroom during the school day must make arrangements with the teacher first. Any arranged visit will be limited to thirty minutes. Classroom visits will not be allowed during classroom or standardized testing.

Any volunteer who serves on campus and interacts with students in an environment not explicitly supervised by an RLA employee must complete and pass a background check.

## **Conduct and Discipline**

### **CODE OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT**

This code of conduct exists so as to ensure that Rockford Lutheran Academy provides an excellent environment in which students can learn, work and play. Each student has a right to learn in a Christian environment. Teachers have the right to expect student’s behavior that allows teachers to teach and students to learn. Students and teachers share the responsibility to maintain such an environment.

Discipline is defined as the student’s ability to manage him or herself within the limits set by school policies and procedures. Parents share equally with teachers the responsibility for discipline. Parents, as co-educators for their children, realize that there will be times when a student steps from the area of student responsibility. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to maintain a classroom atmosphere that enhances learning.

Students enrolled at RLA are expected to adhere to the basic principles of Christian conduct as outlined in God's Word. For these principles, we look to the Old Testament law of the Ten Commandments and to Jesus' words recorded in Mark 12:30-31, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength . . . Love your neighbor as yourself." It is our prayer that the love of Christ compels each student to live for Him ("For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again." II Cor. 5:14-15). As one grows in faith and love, his Christian behavior grows accordingly.

Each teacher has set rules to meet the needs of his/her individual class. Each year these are distributed within the first week of school. Parents share the responsibility for guiding their children toward responsible behavior and providing Christian examples.

Teachers have the right to alter behavior policy as necessary to insure a safe environment. In such times the teacher is to clearly explain the change to the students.

In addition to the rules established by each teacher, RLA expects all of our students to conduct themselves according to the following principles:

**1) Be respectful . . .**

- To those placed into authority by God. Speak truthfully in all interactions.
- By following the rules, policies and procedures set forth by those in positions of authority.
- To the property of others. Do not take or damage any item that is not yours.
- To all members of the RLA family.

With this in mind, the following guidelines apply:

- a) Bullying, picking on, making fun of, or mistreating others is unacceptable.
- b) Talking bad about others is not acceptable.
- c) Hurting or threatening to hurt others is not acceptable. Hurting others can be done through physical actions but also through words.
- d) Weapons, including any kind of gun, knife, or other item that is intended to be used in a violent manner, are not to be brought onto the RLA campus. As toys shaped like these things can often be mistaken for the real thing, these items should not be brought onto campus. Fighting, roughhousing, "joke" fighting, and such is not appropriate behavior.

**2) Be restrained . . .**

- By avoiding behavior that will cause disruption in the classroom or draw undue attention to yourself. Follow all classroom rules.
- By avoiding cursing, swearing and other language that is out of place in the life of a child of God.
- By following the details and the spirit of the RLA Dress Code.

**3) Be responsible . . .**

- By being prepared for school every day, bringing the correct materials with you.
- For your academic success by staying attentive in every class.
- For your academic work by completing assignments on time and preparing for tests and quizzes. Do not cheat or plagiarize.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND APPEAL PROCESS**

Jesus instructs us in Matthew 18:15-18 with these words: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector." RLA strives to follow these instructions when dealing with sin, and also believes that Jesus provides us with this structure to use when a conflict or disagreement exists between His children.

Therefore, if a student or parent is unhappy with a decision made by a faculty or staff member of RLA, he/she should consult with that individual. If not satisfied with the results of that conversation, the student or parent should consult with the Principal. Likewise, if a student or parent is unhappy with a disciplinary or academic action taken against that student, he/she should consult with the Principal. If further appeal is sought, the parent or legal guardian may contact the RLS Executive director at 815-877-9551 for assistance in problem solving.

The following are required as part of the discipline process for students and must be understood in any appeal process:

- The student must have prior knowledge of the conduct which is required or prohibited.

- The student must be told why he/she is being considered for disciplinary action.
- The student must have an opportunity to express his/her views regarding the incident before any decision regarding discipline is made.
- The school official must base his/her decision only on the matters about which the student has been informed.

All students are treated equitably regardless of race, creed, age, sex, national origin, or disability.

## **DISCIPLINE**

When a student at RLA fails to follow any of the set rules of the school, he/she needs to be set right. Hopefully, students will recognize their wrongdoing and confess to their improper behavior. If a student does not recognize his/her improper behavior, it needs to be pointed out to them. Confession is the first step in being set right. Secondly, we expect students to repent for their wrongdoing. To repent means to have a change of heart. Actions and words of remorse demonstrate this change of heart. When repentance occurs, forgiveness follows. God has been gracious and merciful to us, forgiving us of our sins and sending his only Son, Jesus Christ to suffer, die, and rise in victory to wash away our sins. As we live in the Gospel of our Lord, we show this forgiveness to others.

However, we also recognize the need to have direct consequences for improper behavior. Our concern is for the student who has behaved improperly and for other students and staff that this behavior affects. To curb improper behavior, to help students learn from their mistakes, and to lead students to improved self-discipline, the following steps and consequences will be used:

1. The teacher is responsible for day to day discipline in the classroom. The teacher can select consequences appropriate for the misbehavior. The teacher will be in communication with administration and parents as is needed to guide the student in his/her behavior. Behaviors such as disruptive conduct, arriving at class without materials, and cheating are handled by the classroom teacher through problem solving techniques, proactive interventions, detentions, and parent involvement. In some cases the student may be sent to the Principal's office.

*NOTE: If a teacher or administrator is questioning a student about a situation, the student is expected to verbally respond in a truthful manner.*

2. The teacher can assign a student a detention. Doing so means a form is completed and given to the student. The student is to have that form signed by their parents and returned to school. Detentions are to be served within two days of receipt of the detention. Detentions are 30 minutes in length.
3. Sometimes it is necessary to remove a student who is struggling with behavior from the current situation. The teacher can remove a student to the hallway. The teacher can also refer a student to the principal for continued or significant code of conduct violations. The principal may take disciplinary action.
4. The principal and other staff members can also assign detentions and will do so for various infractions of school policies (including tardies, please see that policy).
5. When a student receives 4 detentions in a school year, the principal will contact the parents to discuss the situation. If the student gets 6 detentions in a school year, the principal, parents and student will meet to discuss the student's behavior before the student can return to class. When a student receives 8 detentions, the student will be suspended for one day and placed on probation. A student that receives 10 detentions in a school year will be suspended for a minimum of three days and a meeting will be held to determine a course of action and if the student can remain enrolled at RLA. Detentions for tardies do not count toward this policy.

School staff does the following to assure good discipline throughout Rockford Lutheran Academy:

- The building administrator has the responsibility to enforce discipline for students while they are in school buildings or on school grounds. He maintains adequate supervision while they are on school owned, operated or chartered buses; while they are attending or engaging in school activities; and while they are off school grounds. If student misconduct directly and immediately affects school discipline or the general safety and welfare of students and staff the principal or designated staff member will provide appropriate consequences.
- The administrator or teachers will keep parents informed of consistent or serious misconduct. Additionally, administrators or teachers will involve parents in problem solving regarding the disciplinary action. They will assist parents, when necessary, in identifying community resources that are available to help the family deal with persistent or serious discipline issues.
- Although students may be suspended without first notifying parents, the administrator will always make every effort to notify parents that the suspension has occurred and explain the reason for the suspension.
- The Code of Conduct is not meant to be an exclusive list of unacceptable behavior. Rockford Lutheran Board policy does give the Principal the authority to discipline, suspend or expel any student "when the presence of a student is detrimental to the best interests of the school." This can include behavior not specified in the Code of Conduct which is generally known to be inappropriate or behavior which is in violation of federal, state,

county or city laws and ordinances.

- Additional policies related to student behavior might be included in the RLA newsletter. Parents and students are responsible for knowing the content of the student handbook. Violation of individual school handbook policies may also result in disciplinary action including detention, suspension, or expulsion.
  - Suspensions are imposed for a period of one day or more, but not to exceed ten days and are to be administered by a building administrator or representative.
  - No student being suspended from school will be released without notification to parents or guardian and an informal hearing held with the student.
- The severity of the consequence is determined by the offense.
  - The Teacher and/or Principal has the right to determine the severity of the offense and to award an appropriate disciplinary consequence.
  - Failure of a student to comply with a given consequence will result in further disciplinary action, possibly being more severe in an attempt to help the student to see the error of the behavior.
  - RLA expects full support from parents when dealing with discipline issues. If parents are not willing to cooperate with the school and its disciplinary actions, student enrollment may be jeopardized.

### **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Everyone at Rockford Lutheran School is committed to making our schools a safe and caring place for all students. We will treat each other with respect, and we will refuse to tolerate bullying in any form at our schools.

Our school defines bullying as follows:

**Bullying is not Christ-like. It is unfair and one-sided.  
It happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose.**

Please note that bullying behavior is targeted and ongoing. It is very dangerous to label meanness as bullying as it detracts from situations that truly include targeted and ongoing negative behavior. Unfortunately, meanness happens frequently as we are all sinners and young children are still learning how to be positive with each other in all situations. Being mean to another student is not acceptable and will be immediately addressed. We constantly strive to encourage kindness amongst all students.

#### **Examples of bullying include:**

- Continually hurting someone physically by hitting, kicking, tripping, pushing, touching inappropriately, etc.
- Continually teasing someone in a hurtful way.
- Continually using put-downs, such as insulting of someone's race or gender.
- Starting and/or spreading rumors about someone.
- Continually leaving someone out on purpose or trying to get other kids not to play with someone.
- Turning people against someone else.
- Continually messing with, taking or damaging another person's things.

#### **Staff at our schools will do the following things to prevent bullying and help students feel safe at school:**

- Closely supervise students in all areas of the schools and playgrounds.
- Watch for signs of bullying and stop it when it happens.
- Respond quickly and sensitively to bullying reports
- Listen to parents' concerns about bullying.
- Look into all reported bullying incidents.
- Provide consequences for bullying based on the school's discipline code
- Provide immediate consequences for retaliation against students who report bullying.

#### **Students at our schools are expected to do the following things to prevent bullying:**

- Treat each other respectfully.
- Refuse to bully others.
- Refuse to let others be bullied.
- Refuse to watch, laugh, or join in when someone is being bullied.
- Try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out.
- Report bullying to an adult.



## **LAW ENFORCEMENT, JUVENILE COURT AND HUMAN SERVICE NOTIFICATION**

In cases involving suspected alcohol or illegal drugs, each school will notify law enforcement of the individual involved unless the student is self-reporting for the purpose of therapeutic intervention.

The principal or representative must also notify police when a weapon is found in the possession of a student. The principal or staff member may additionally contact police anytime he or she suspects any legal violation has occurred.

Those students who are under the jurisdiction of juvenile court shall have their grades, attendance, truancy, behavior and discipline reported to juvenile court. Student violation of school rules may result in further court action.

## **REASONS FOR EXPULSION**

Expulsion is to be administered by the Rockford Lutheran School Executive Director. If a student's actions present a serious and/or continued violation of conduct, the Executive Director may recommend that the student be expelled for the remainder of the semester. The Executive Director may extend the expulsion for the remainder of that semester plus the following semester. The student and or parent or legal guardian is entitled to be present for a hearing. A student may be suspended up to 10 school days pending a hearing on a recommendation for expulsion.

Any student expelled from school by the Executive Director of Schools may be readmitted only by the Executive Director. In cases involving expulsion, the Executive Director may establish conditions for readmission. Conditions for readmission will focus on behavior and academic standards and may be in the form of written conditions. Violation of these conditions could lead to another recommendation for expulsion.

Examples of reasons for expulsion: Arson or attempted arson, inappropriate sexual conduct, including but not limited to indecent exposure, "depantsing" or attempting to "depants" or to remove clothing from another person, deliberately touching of another student's intimate parts, or the clothing covering intimate parts and display of affection which includes affectionate actions generally considered to be private.

## **SHARED MISCONDUCT**

All individual's concerned in committing a Code of Conduct violation, whether they directly commit the violation or aid and abet the violation are subject to penalties as outlined in this handbook. When two or more individuals, acting together, violate the Code of Conduct, each is responsible for the acts of the other and shall be subject to the relevant Code of Conduct violation and penalty.

## **SUBSTANCE USE BY STUDENTS**

Consuming, using, transmitting, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs are illegal and prohibited in school or at any school-related activity. The use of the above substances will result in immediate school suspension and/or expulsion.

## **Dress Code**

Rockford Lutheran wishes to establish a climate in which learning can thrive without distractions by extremes in dress. The principles of modesty, simplicity, good taste and neatness are core values that relate to Christian dress.

The following "standardized dress" regulations are in effect at the academy for all students. All clothing must be of the approved color and style.

### **Shirts, Tops:**

- Any solid color polo or oxford shirt with no visible logo must be worn.
- A solid color long-sleeve or short-sleeve shirt with no visible logo may be worn under the polo or oxford shirt.
- A solid-color sweatshirt or sweater with no visible logo may be worn over the polo or oxford shirt.
- A spirit-wear sweatshirt may be worn over the polo or oxford shirt.
- Ties may be worn with an oxford shirt and may be solid-colored or patterned, but should not have any characters on them.
- Tops must fit appropriately so that the stomach area or upper torso are never exposed.
- Spirit-wear tops may be worn on Fridays in place of the polo or oxford shirt.

### **Shorts, Skirts, Dresses:**

- Shorts and skirts will be no shorter than 2" above the knees.

- No undergarments are to be visible above pants or skirt waistline or below pant or skirt hem.
- Shorts may be tan (khaki), navy or black. Skirts may be these colors or RR Plaid.
- Shorts or skirts may have inside pockets but no pockets stitched on the outside
- Jumpers of these colors may be worn but must fit the length requirement.
- Polo dresses of any solid color with no visible logo may be worn but must fit the length requirement.
- Tights/lettings may be worn under shorts or skirts. These can have colors or patterns, but should not have any writing or visible logo on them and should be free of holes.

**Pants:**

- Pants may be tan (khaki), navy or black.
- Pants shall have no pockets stitched on the outside.
- Pants cannot have any holes or frays.

**Shoes:**

- Closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times.
- Athletic shoes are required for Physical Education class.

**Hair:**

- Hair should be kept neat and away from eyes.
- No bleaching or coloring of hair is allowed.
- Hats, caps, any headwear, sweatbands or sunglasses (unless specified by a doctor) will not be worn during school hours.

**Makeup:**

- Makeup is not to be worn.

**Jewelry:**

- Jewelry should be modest and safe. Spiked, excessively long or heavy chains may not be worn. No dangling earrings. Students will be asked to remove any jewelry or item that is a distraction to the class.
- No tattoos or body piercing other than the ear is allowed.

Standardized dress may be purchased anywhere if they meet the above standards. They can also be ordered through Lands' End, Educational Outfitters or Dennis Uniforms

School Codes & Contact Information:

Lands' End: 900122813 [www.landsend.com/school](http://www.landsend.com/school) # 1-800-469-2222

Educational Outfitters [www.educationaloutfitters.com](http://www.educationaloutfitters.com) # 1-815-436-7777

Dennis: #GAAFV [www.dennisuniform.com](http://www.dennisuniform.com) # 1-800-854-6951

Each year, students can purchase a spirit T-shirts or sweatshirts in the school colors. Each Friday is School Spirit Day where all students are encouraged to wear school colors.

## **Parents / CPTO**

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Rockford Lutheran Academy recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family during the child's entire school career. To support the goals of Rockford Lutheran Academy to prepare all students for success, the school and parents must work as partners. Parents share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children. Rockford Lutheran Academy in collaboration with parents shall establish and develop practices that enhance parent involvement and reflect the specific needs of students and families.

To this end, RLA will support the development, implementation, and regular evaluation of parent involvement at all school levels and in a variety of roles. Parent involvement will include, but will not be limited to the following:

- Promotion of clear two-way communication between the school and the family concerning the child's educational development and progress through progress reports and parent teacher conferences. Conferences

will be scheduled during the school year, but parents are encouraged to contact their student's teacher and schedule a conference whenever they have questions or concerns. Teachers will arrange for a conference whenever the academic or behavioral situation warrants a conference.

- Parents of students in grades 3 through 5 are encouraged to use Skyward and online communication as the forms for communicating grades, grading progress, homework and other information that can help the parent know the status of their child's progress.
- A weekly school newsletter is distributed to each family through email. Newsletters contain important dates and information on upcoming events. The RLA administration sends updates through email as needed.
- Weekly "purple" folders with classroom updates and communication from teaching staff comes home every Friday.
- Concerns may be addressed when necessary and calls are returned as soon as possible by the teacher.
- Web site communication through [www.rockfordlutheran.org](http://www.rockfordlutheran.org). The Rockford Lutheran website will allow you to view family access for financial updates, school calendar and school events. Parents may also refer to Skyward to communicate with teachers about their student's schedule, grades, progress, and a calendar of events.
- Participation of parents in school leadership and decision making through advisory roles such as the Christian Parent – Teacher Organization (CPTO) and the Parent Advisory Council.

#### **ACTIVE/COMMITTED CPTO**

- The designation as a Christian PTO places special emphasis on strengthening our Christian faith through service. Over 200 volunteers have assisted in all types of school projects and have served as partners to the teaching staff. The CPTO holds regular meetings that are attended by parents, teachers, and their families. CPTO efforts help provide students with learning materials, Christian service opportunities, and social experiences.
- Each year the CPTO and school host special events to join our families and school staff together for socialization and family fun.

### **Fun & Friends Extended Care**

RLA seeks to serve parents by providing care of students before and after school. These are not academic programs, but rather opportunities for students to be supervised and cared for in a safe environment while having fun with friends and activities.

#### **COST**

There is a \$4.00 per hourly charge for children in the extended care program. There is a minimum charge of \$2 (30 min) for each time that a student signs into the extended care program. Accounts are then charged on 30-minute (\$2) increments. Charges are assessed through the Mealtime software program.

#### **MORNING PROGRAM**

The morning program is housed in the school lunchroom and accommodates students before school (6:30-7:45 AM). Students may purchase breakfast style food items in the morning program. At 7:45 AM, students are dismissed from the lunchroom and head to their classrooms.

#### **AFTERNOON PROGRAM**

The afternoon program utilizes the school facility and playgrounds (3:00 –6:00 PM). The afternoon program begins in the lunchroom where students enjoy a snack that they brought from home. Snacks can also be purchased for \$.75 each. Parents can choose to have their student participate in the homework room which is a quiet study space from 3:20-4:00pm with a staff member providing assistance. At different times, students will be using the computer lab, gym, outdoor playground and other facilities.

## **SIGN IN AND OUT**

Students arriving between 6:30 AM and 7:30 AM will go directly to the lunchroom and be signed in by a staff member. Parents do not have to come into the building to sign students “in” to the extended care program. Students knowing that they are attending the afternoon program will go directly to the lunchroom at the 3:00 PM school dismissal. Students who are not picked up by 3:10 PM from school dismissal will go to the lunchroom and be signed in to the afternoon program. Parents (or whatever adult is picking up the student) must come into the RLA building and sign out their child. A staff member will be stationed in the lobby who will unlock the exterior door, call for the student to be picked up through a radio system, and oversee the signing out process. Only adults who are on the school pick-up list may sign students out of the extended care program.

## **Health Care**

The Health Office will be open from 7:45 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Monday thru Friday. The Health Office is staffed by a registered nurse. At times, the nurse may be in the main school office.

## **ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS**

Students must to be kept home from school if they have any of the following:

- **Fever:** Fever is defined as a temperature over 100 degrees. Students may not return to school until he/she *has been fever free for 24 hours* without the aid of a fever reducer such as Tylenol or Advil.
- **Diarrhea:** Diarrhea is defined as 4-5 loose stools within a 24-hour period. Students may not return to school until 12 hours after the last episode.
- **Vomiting:** Students may return to school 12 hours after the last episode *and* only after they are able to tolerate food.
- **Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis):** Children must be treated with prescription antibiotic drops for a full 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Acute Infections:** This *could* include but is not limited to any infectious disease that can be transmitted to other such as: **upper respiratory infections, strep throat, scarlet fever, chicken pox, etc...** Any infection requiring an antibiotic will require that the child be excluded from school until they are fever free *and* on the antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- **Persistent Cough:** A persistent cough can be warring to a child; resulting in fatigue, disruption in the classroom, and further spreading of germs. In this case, the child may need to stay home until the condition improves.
- **Skin Conditions:** Any undiagnosed sore that can not be covered or untreated skin eruptions will require a doctor’s written clearance before the child may return to school.
- **Chicken Pox:** Students may not return to school until they are fever free for a full 24 hours and all of the lesions are dry and crusted.
- **Shingles:** Students with shingles may attend school as long as the lesions are completely covered. If the lesions cannot be covered, the student is excluded from school until they are dry and crusted.
- **Head Lice:** Students may return to school once the first treatment is complete and the school nurse has verified that the child is nit (egg) free.

If your child has any of the conditions listed above, please inform the school when calling in your student as absent. Certain conditions, such as Chicken Pox, must be reported by the school to the Winnebago County Health Department.

## **ALLERGIES**

It is important that we understand your child’s allergies, especially if they are severe allergies that warrant the presence of an Epi-pen. The RLA nurse’s office requests that allergy information be shared in writing with this office. In the case of severe allergies, information from the child’s doctor may be requested/required and an allergy plan will be established. For information on food allergies, please see below.

## **DENTAL EXAMINATIONS**

An examination by a dentist is required by law for students in Kindergarten, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades and must be completed on the Illinois Department of Public Health “Dental Examination Record”. This completed form must be submitted to the school by May 15<sup>th</sup> for the mandated years.

## **FOOD ALLERGY POLICY**

Food allergies can be life threatening. Even exposure to trace amounts of allergens in certain foods can cause a life-threatening reaction. Our goal is to ensure that every student in our school is safe. The risk of accidental exposure to

foods in schools can be reduced as we work together to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for all students, including those with food allergies.

### ***In our classrooms.....***

All grade-level classrooms will be considered “nut-safe.”

1. All products brought into classrooms for snack time/parties/birthday treats must **NOT CONTAIN PEANUTS/NUTS**. Items that contain disclaimers such as “may contain” or “manufactured in a facility with” are also **NOT** permissible. Items must be pre-packaged and contain an official ingredient list. No homemade treats. Ingredient labels need to be verified by the school nurse before distribution in the classroom.
2. Labels must be read every time a treat is distributed by the supervising staff member.
3. Any food ordered-in from a restaurant **MUST** be cleared *in advance* by the principal/school nurse.
4. Ingredient labels for supplies used for in-classroom projects/science experiments/art projects must be inspected to confirm that they do not contain peanuts/nuts (or other allergens specific to identified students with food allergies in that classroom).
5. The distribution of treats or candy in the classroom should be limited to special events such as birthdays and holidays. The use of non-food items as educational tools and classrooms incentives will be encouraged.
6. A list of students with food allergies will be distributed to teachers at the beginning of each school year by the school nurse. All staff will be educated on food allergies, the symptoms of an allergic reaction, and what to do in an emergency.
7. All students with known food allergies will have an “Emergency Action Plan” updated yearly and on file in the school nurses’ office. Copies of the emergency action plans will be distributed to staff and will be available in the lunchroom. This action plan is to be signed by both parent and the student’s health care provider. Emergency medications will be kept in an easily accessible location in the nurses’ office (school nurse will monitor expiration dates).
8. If the parent of a student with a food allergy is *not* attending a field trip, the student will be assigned to a staff member who has been trained to implement the student’s emergency action plan.

### ***In our lunchroom....***

An allergy table will be provided for students with food allergies (student’s parent will determine)

1. Students will be encouraged **NOT** to share/exchange food with other students.
2. Proper cleaning of tables will be completed in between each lunch period.
3. Staff and students will be encouraged to wash their hands prior to returning to the classroom.
4. Lunchroom staff and volunteers will be educated on the students with food allergies and instructed about food allergies, the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction, and emergency procedures. A list of students with food allergies will be posted.
5. Additional precautions/procedures will be implemented as needed on an individual student basis.

### **HEALTH EXAMINATIONS**

The “Certificate of Child Health Examination” form from the state of Illinois is required to be completed and signed by a physician and parent or guardian upon entrance to preschool, kindergarten, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades and for all students who transfer from out of state or out of country; regardless of their grade level. A complete record of the student’s immunizations must also be included and in compliance with School Code of Illinois (sec.27-8.1). For parents of transfer students from out of state or out of country, please be aware that immunization requirements vary from state-to-state and additional vaccines may be required to comply with Illinois state law.

### **HEALTHY SNACK POLICY**

Healthy daily snacks help feed our brains throughout the day and promote smart food choices in the future. Every student is given a time where they can enjoy an energy boost in the morning. Please send a snack of fresh fruit or vegetables or cheese with your child daily. Only water is allowed in the classrooms for snack.

### **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

Children who are injured or complaining of illness will be sent to the nurse who will evaluate the child’s condition. Based on the nurse’s findings, the parents/guardians may be called to come for the child.

In the event that a child is injured or has an accident at school, first aid will be administered. Emergency medical services, 911, will be activated if the situation warrants and then the parents/guardian will be notified. Children will be sent to the main office when the nurse is not in the building. Please feel free to contact the school nurse at 815-226-4947, ext. 275 with any questions of concerns.

## **MEDICATIONS**

All student medications are stored and dispensed from the nurse's office. When a student travels off-campus (i.e. for a field trip), the medication will be sent with the student unless the parent is also attending and bringing their own supply of the student's medication. If the parent is not attending, a teacher will be instructed on how/when to dispense the medication as needed.

Daily Prescription Medication\*: Children requiring medication on a daily basis at school must first obtain a written prescription by a physician. The prescription is to be completed on the "Authorization for Administration of Medication" form which can be obtained from the school nurse or from your physician's office (must be signed by both the physician and the parent/guardian).

Short Term Prescription or Over-the-Counter Medication\*: From time to time, children may require short term medication at school. This could either be antibiotics or over-the-counter (O.T.C.) medications. Parents/guardians are required to drop off the medication in the nurse's office where they can complete a "Short Term Medication Request" form.

\*All medication given at school *must* come to school in its original container/packaging.

## **RECESS & PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

If a student meets the health guidelines for attending school, he or she is expected to participate in recess and physical education class unless there is a written excuse from the physician.

## **SPECIAL MEDICAL NEEDS**

Parents of any student with special needs should contact the school nurse prior to the start of the school year to discuss the child's needs. This may include but is not limited to students with diabetes, ADD, ADHD, asthma, seizure disorders, vision or hearing deficits, life threatening allergies, or other disabilities. It is also a good idea to make the school nurse and teacher aware of allergies, especially food allergies.

## **Early Childhood Supplement** (normally preschool through kindergarten)

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD PHILOSOPHY**

The RLA preschool is guided by our overall school philosophy. In addition, we believe that preschool should help students develop socially/emotionally, academically, physically, and in language. Much of this learning takes place through guided play. The goal of preschool is to prepare students to excel in kindergarten.

### **BAD DAYS**

RLA personnel will do everything possible to work with our youngest students, with the goal of growth and happiness. We recognize that preschool students can just have a bad day. If your child is struggling to maintain a functioning presence during the day, it may be in everyone's best interest for the child to go home early. This is not a punishment, but rather a way to help a child cope with a bad day. If a child is experiencing this type of day, the teacher, principal or other staff member may contact the parents to pick up the child for the day. This is a last resort in helping our students succeed.

### **BATHROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Enrollment requirement: Children must be able to toilet independently in order to enroll at Rockford Lutheran Academy.

This includes...

- The child recognizing when he/she needs to use the bathroom and is able to share this need with an adult.
- Taking care of all normal actions involved in using the restroom. This means entering the bathroom, preparing clothing, urinating, releasing a bowel movement, cleaning properly, reclothing, washing hands and exiting the restroom.
- Students must also be able to change their own clothes, should they have a bathroom accident.

It is understandable that some children have bathroom accidents as they make the transition to school. RLA seeks to

make every attempt to have the student continue in school without interruption, however, we are not equipped to assist students who have an excessive amount of bathroom accidents. Excessive amount of accidents is defined as ...

- 4 or more in the first 10 school days of attendance,
- 6 or more in the first 4 weeks of school,
- 4 or more in any 4 weeks after the first four weeks of the school year.

If it is determined that a student has excessive bathroom accidents and cannot toilet independently, the student will be removed from school for a minimum of two weeks so that the parent can further work with the child to toilet independently. The child's enrollment in the school can be reserved by the continuation of tuition payments. The child can return to school at a time agreed upon by the parent, teacher, and administration.

RLA personnel will assist with bathroom use according to the following parameters:

- RLA personnel may be present in multi-stall restrooms with students in order to provide direction. RLA personnel may call into stalls, but should not be in a stall with a student. Whenever RLA personnel is in such a restroom with students, the door must remain open. In a single person restroom, the RLA personnel may look in but should not be in the restroom with the student. If the RLA personnel must enter a single person restroom with a student, the door must remain open.
- RLA personnel may provide step by step directions for students struggling in the bathroom.
- Teachers may provide assistance in reclothing, including the connecting of buttons, snaps, etc.
- RLA personnel may assist by providing toilet paper or wipes to students as they clean themselves.
- RLA personnel will respect the privacy of a student's body and will not touch the student in private areas unless extreme conditions call for assistance, in which case the parents will be notified. For example, a student dealing with a catastrophic bowel movement needs assistance in cleaning themselves. The RLA personnel may assist the student and will notify the parent immediately of the situation.

If a student has an accident, the RLA personnel will follow these parameters:

- Students will be taken to a bathroom to change clothes. The door will not be closed entirely. Clean clothes will be provided to the child. A place to sit to change will be provided to the student.
- RLA personnel may provide step by step directions for the child as they change clothes.
- RLA personnel will help secure the soiled clothes.
- A student changing clothes will be re-evaluated if unable to complete the change in 15 minutes. During the time the student is changing, RLA personnel will check the child's progress at least every three minutes. If the student is not finished changing after 15 minutes, the RLA personnel can 1) contact the parents to come and pick up the child immediately, 2) assist with final steps such as socks, shoes, buttons, etc., 3) allow the student more time if significant progress has been made and the RLA personnel is confident that the child can complete the process if given more time.
- RLA personnel will notify parents every time that a student has a bathroom accident. This can be done through direct contact via a phone call, text or personal interaction when the parent picks up the child.

## **BITING**

Young children sometimes bite because they are frustrated, angry or excited. The following steps will be taken when a child has bitten:

- The teacher will discuss the situation with the child and let him/her know that biting hurts.
- An incident report will be written and a phone call will be made to the parents.
- If a child bites several times in one day, we will call you to pick up your child for the day.
- After several occurrences, the Principal will request a meeting with the parents.

The following steps will be taken when a child has been bitten:

- The teacher or nurse will assess the child and wash the area with soap and water
- An incident report will be written and a phone call will be made to the parents.
- If the skin has been broken, a recommendation will be made to see the pediatrician.

## **CHANGE OF CLOTHING**

It is important that each child have a complete change of clothing at school. This extra clothing is not just for bathroom accidents. Children paint, play in water, get in mud and may get their clothing wet or dirty in many ways. So please bring underpants, pants, socks and a shirt for your child. They will be stored in a tote bag in the classroom. Please provide your child with a summer and winter change of clothes along with a pair of shoes if possible so we may change soiled clothing.

## **ENTRANCE SCREENING**

Please refer to information under “Assessment for Acceptance” in this handbook. For students entering preschool, the assessment or screening is completed by any RLA preschool teacher and is focused on the student’s ability to follow directions and work with the teacher. The screening is an opportunity for the teacher to begin to know and understand the student. Any action of violence (i.e. throwing, hitting, etc.) or rebellion (i.e. refusing to cooperate) may result in the student’s application being denied. Screenings are performed during the summer at designated times.

As screenings are quick glimpses into a child’s readiness for preschool, each child is accepted on a probationary period. This probationary period last for 30 student attendance days. If the teacher has concerns that may affect continued enrollment, the teacher will consult with the principal and request a meeting with the parents, principal and teacher to discuss the situation.

### **HITTING**

Young children sometimes hit out of frustration or anger. We seek to help children deal with these emotions in alternative ways and will work with each child to accomplish just that. However, a serious situation occurs when one student hits another or an employee.

The following steps will be taken when a child has hit:

- The teacher will discuss the situation with the child and let him/her know that hitting is not acceptable. A warning will be given.
- If the student hits again, especially in the same day, the teacher will contact the parents.
- If a child hits several times in one day, we may call you to pick up your child for the day.
- After several occurrences, the Principal will request a meeting with the parents.

The following steps will be taken when a child has been hit:

- The teacher or nurse will assess the child and the contacted area.
- If any physical mark is present from the hit, parents will be contacted. A picture may be taken of the physical mark. This picture is used to show parents of the child who is hit or the parents of the child that did the hitting.

### **ITEMS FROM HOME**

Children should not bring personal items from home. No cell phones, iPods, or other electronic items are allowed in preschool classrooms. No toy guns or weapons of any kind are allowed at school. The teacher may occasionally ask the child to bring a special item and/or special books to share in class; but after the special toy or book has been shared, your child will be asked to put it away in his or her cubby to avoid lost items and conflicts with other children. The school is not responsible for personal items brought from home.

### **LATE ARRIVAL**

If your child is not in the room by the designated start time and the teacher has already begun circle time, please wait quietly in the hall with your child until circle time is finished. Please do not interrupt circle time as this is an important routine used to launch our day. When circle time has ended, please have your child enter the classroom.