



The Rise School™

O F H O U S T O N

*"Where All Kids Shine"™*

# **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2022-2023 School Year**

**Operating Policies and Procedures  
5618 H. Mark Crosswell, Jr. Street  
Houston, Texas 77021**

**Telephone:** 713-532-7473  
**Fax:** 713-383-7007  
**Email:** [jastailey@riseschool.org](mailto:jastailey@riseschool.org)  
**Website:** [www.riseschool.org](http://www.riseschool.org)

The Rise School™ admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. Child day care operations are public accommodations under the U.S. Dept. of Justice Civil Rights Division, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 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).

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# The Rise School™

OF HOUSTON

*"Where All Kids Shine"™*

Dear Parents,

The Board and staff of The Rise School of Houston welcome 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.

The Rise 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 located in The Rise Policies and Procedures Manual and on the Rise website at [www.riseschool.org](http://www.riseschool.org).

Parents are valuable people to The Rise School. As a parent/caregiver, you are an essential component of what makes Rise successful year after year. You are encouraged to share your ideas, interests, special talents, and enthusiasm with us. We are thrilled to have you as part of The Rise School of Houston family.

Sincerely,

The Board and Staff of  
The Rise School of Houston

# Directory 2022-2023

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## The Rise School of Houston Board of Directors-Officers

<b>Co-Chairs</b>	<b>Reginald Martin/Scott Waltmon</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Brad Elgin</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Scott Waltmon</b>

## The Rise School of Houston Staff

### Administration

<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Jan Stailey</b>
<b>Director of Education</b>	<b>Jolanda Sinegal</b>
<b>Office Administrator</b>	<b>Kemberly Kennemer</b>
<b>School Nurse</b>	<b>Pollyanna Campbell, RN</b>
<b>Receptionist/Lead Teacher Assistant</b>	<b>Peggy McCrary</b>
<b>Office Assistant</b>	<b>Christopher Scott</b>

### Development

<b>Director of Advancement</b>	<b>Ashley Kress</b>
<b>Special Events/Communications Coordinator</b>	<b>Megan Mills</b>
<b>Grants and Donor Coordinator</b>	

### Therapy

<b>Language/Assessment Specialist</b>	<b>Jana Post</b>
<b>Music Therapist</b>	<b>Veronica Butler</b>
<b>Occupational Therapist (TCH)</b>	<b>Tamara Freeman</b>
<b>Physical Therapist (TCH)</b>	<b>Emily Berman</b>
<b>Speech Therapist (TCH)</b>	<b>Meredith Daly</b>

### Teachers and Teacher/Classroom Assistants

<b>Infants</b>	<b>Margaret Herrera</b>
	Vikki Acosta
	Jenny Gil
	Tammy Palmer
	<b>Tiffany Maldonado</b>
	Ashley Ruiz
	Bobbie Tatlonghari
	Stanna Wilson-Young

**Young Toddlers**

**Dulce Ladner**

Kelsey Fearing  
Yessica Rocha  
Zoila Velasquez

**Stacey Micheli**

Klarissa Lopez  
Anali Ruiz  
Abby Tassin

**Toddlers**

**Olivia Espinosa**

Lakia Bernard  
Allie Bischoff  
Maria Lopez

**Holly Hoffman**

Marissa Kelley  
Elizabeth Resendez  
Cynthia Torres

**Preschool**

**Saveem Afraz**

Martha Alvarado  
Maddie Truman  
Sayrd Young

**Candice Trotter**

Vanice Chandler  
Monica Gaseor  
Eve Medina

**Pre-Kindergarten**

**Menomanee Smith**

Molly Hart  
Lily Maldonado  
Arlene Ocampo

**Erica Kelley**

Valeria Acosta  
Elizabeth Berryhill  
Debora Brownell

**Floaters**

Veronica Anchondo  
Donna Avolio  
Doris Buckley  
Lois McDonald

**Housekeeping**

Ruben Gil  
Maria Rodriguez  
Felix Vasquez

### **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 Houston serves a capacity of 96 children in ten classrooms. The school serves young children ages six months through six years 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.

### **History of Rise**

When a 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, as they raised three active children they researched 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 disabilities 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 The Rise School in Houston, which model the RISE Program of the Stallings Center at the University of Alabama. The Rise School of Houston opened January 20, 2000 with three classrooms and seventeen children. The school has now expanded to ten classrooms for 96 children. The Rise School of Houston is approved by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization.

### **Rise Mission Statement**

The Rise School of Houston provides the highest quality of early educational services to children ages six months to six years with and without disabilities in an inclusive environment. Rise delivers comprehensive education, intervention and therapy to our students during their formative years.

### **Vision**

A world where all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can be successful, contributing members of society.

### **School Philosophy and Goals**

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 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 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 Rise School to work toward achieving an individual's full potential at a pace unique to each child.***

### **Accreditation**

As of November 30, 2003, The Rise School of Houston 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.

### **Licensing**

The Rise School of Houston is licensed by the Child Care Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Rise adheres to the *Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers* monitored by HHSC site visits. The most recent compliance report is posted in the main lobby 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 (713) 940-3009. To report child abuse or neglect, call the Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline at (800) 252-5400, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **Supervision**

The Rise School of Houston 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.

### **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 at the front desk. Families are welcome visitors in the school at all times unless a special procedure is in place. Parents are encouraged to observe and volunteer at the school as often as possible. Parents may visit at any time during the school day to observe their child, the school's operation, and program activities without having to secure prior approval.

### **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 two hours per month as part of their support of the Rise program. Parents may discuss volunteer opportunities with the Executive Director, Director of Education or Director of Advancement.

**Background checks are conducted for all frequent visitors, volunteers, employees and consultants who work at Rise on a regular basis.**

### **Enrollment**

Children with developmental delays are eligible for enrollment at the age of nine months. Typically developing children are eligible for enrollment at the age of six months. The enrollment process begins with a tour of the school. Tours are scheduled by the Assessment Specialist 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 Physician's Health Assessment with the immunization record, signed by a physician. **In accordance with state licensure requirements, immunization 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 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 each child 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.

### **Calendar/Operating Hours/Arrival and Departure**

The 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 twelve weeks of vacation/teacher in-service per year: one week in November, three weeks in December-January, one week in March, two weeks in May-June, and five weeks in July-August. The projected days of operation for each year are supplied in advance to allow parents to plan alternative childcare 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 teaching staff. Administrative staff are typically on campus until 5:00 p.m. daily. 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 lobby or Sunshine Room with their parents. In order for children to maximally benefit from the educational services, parents are strongly encouraged to bring their children no later than 8:10 a.m. each day. The beginning of the day is valuable instructional time. When children are late to school, it affects each 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. For safety, children must never be left without direct transfer to an adult; therefore, children must always be brought directly to and from the classroom unless a special procedure is in place. Parents are required to sign their child in and out each day.

Parents are responsible to provide lunch for their child if they arrive at school after lunch is served. The children's rest time is between 11:30 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. Out of respect for the other children, a child may not be dropped off after a classroom's naptime has started. They may reenter the classroom after 1:15 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 waking the other children in the classroom. The *Child Pick Up Form* must be completed prior to enrollment and arrangements 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 the first time. Rise will make a copy of the authorized person's driver's license and keep this on file. The child is released only to authorized persons with properly installed car seats.

### **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, speech, language, 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 language specialist, music, speech, physical, and occupational therapists.

### **Curriculum**

The Rise curriculum is based on the **A**ssessment, **E**valuation, and **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.

Parents are requested to complete the *AEPS Family Report* in June of each year. Each child's progress on the **AEPS** is charted and graphed and presented at an IIP review meeting.

### **Therapy**

Rise offers a number of services to children that may include physical, occupational, speech, 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.

### **Class Description**

Our program houses ten classrooms serving 8-13 students per classroom. Children are assigned to classrooms based on their chronological age and educational needs. The classrooms include: two infant classes (6 months to 18 months), two young toddler classes (18 months to 24 months), two toddler classes, two preschool classes, and two pre-kindergarten classes. Each classroom employs a Lead 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, two instructional Teacher Assistants and a Classroom Assistant. 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. Periodically group assemblies are held for age-appropriate community performances. Children may or may not fall asleep at rest time. Each child's schedule is individualized so that the day can include as many learning opportunities as possible. A 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.

### **Conscious Discipline**

Every classroom has its share of disciplinary issues, and The Rise School of Houston is no exception. Where this inclusive preschool distinguishes itself is with how matters are handled. Recent research in brain chemistry and developmental psychology show that fear-based disciplinary programs (such as seclusion, suspension or expulsion) seriously impair learning and self-esteem. Simply put, children need to feel safe to do their best learning. The Rise School of Houston has introduced "Conscious Discipline," a disciplinary philosophy that teaches children how to regulate their own behavior. One of the problems with the reward and punishment system traditionally used in schools is that they are external. Our goal is to inspire behavioral change from within. Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management program that empowers both teachers and students. Conscious Discipline offers a relationship-based community model of classroom management. The key is a sense of community, within the "school family" at 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 give the system power. As we seek meaningful relationships with one another, we must also learn skills of interaction that promote mutual respect. Developed by Dr. Becky Bailey, Conscious Discipline stresses the following seven skills:

1. **Composure** – Be who you want children to be.
2. **Encouragement** – We are all in this together.
3. **Assertiveness** – Saying "no" and being heard.
4. **Choices** – Building self-esteem and willpower.
5. **Positive Intent** – See the best in others.
6. **Empathy**- Handling the fussing and the fits.
7. **Consequences** – Learning from mistakes.

Strong relationships with the teacher and other students motivate proper behavior. Conflict is addressed as a “teachable moment” not a shameful event where the child is punished or sent away to time-out. A “Safe Place” is established within the classroom, where students deal with complex emotions. Conscious Discipline also requires teachers to remain calm and composed especially when dealing with disciplinary issues. We can’t expect our children to demonstrate composure if the adults in their lives lack it.

### **Expulsion and Suspension Policy**

Prior to the expulsion of any child from the program the staff and director will follow these guidelines:

- Identify and engage mental and behavioral health consultants and community resources after obtaining parent permission
- Reduce the number of days or amount of time in care for a specified amount of time.
- Conference with parents to discuss positive behavior interventions and development of goals.
- Document efforts to prevent and reduce expulsion.
- Provide reasonable accommodations.

Transitions Procedures – If an expulsion must occur Rise staff will assist the child and family in transitioning to another program by identifying and engaging mental/behavioral consultants and community resources to assist in determining the most appropriate placement for the child.

### **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 (DFPS) via the Texas Abuse Hotline. The DFPS 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 DFPS with information they request without needing informed parental consent.

### **Communication Between School and Home/Parent Notifications**

Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers regularly. 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 receptionist (713-532-7473), which will be reviewed by the classroom teacher at noon or 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 immediately. Parents are requested to schedule a conference time if they need to talk to teachers and/or therapists 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 updates sent home each Monday. 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 infant, young toddler and toddler classrooms.

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.

### **Social Media Etiquette**

#### **What is posted on "See Saw" stays on "See Saw."**

As a school family we respect each other's differences including each family's approach to social media. Some of our families allow photos of their child to be shared on See Saw but are not comfortable with their sharing on social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. Please only share photos of your own child and ask that any grandparents or other family members do the same for all social media platforms.

Sometimes you will see a photo/video of your child stringing beads, saying a complete sentence or working on any goal from their IIP. Remember this is just a step in the process. When you child completes the goal 80% of the time then the goal is met. Please celebrate each step along the way.

See Saw is for you to track your own child's progress, not to compare to that of their peers. Each of our children is unique and so is their development.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parent meetings are held a minimum of twice a year with all parents to discuss their student's progress. Goals and objectives in all developmental areas are reviewed and revised to reflect progress through the curriculum based on assessments. Conferences will be held if additional interventions are needed including social/emotional behaviors. Parents are welcome to request additional meetings with the Teacher, Therapists and/or Director at any time.

### **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. Their child's personal supplies including:
  - a. an extra change of clothing;
  - b. disposable diapers;
  - c. toothbrush and toothpaste;
  - d. brush and comb;
  - e. a pillow and blanket;

- f. diaper wipes;
  - g. any medications (prescription and non-prescription including ointments, teething gels, etc), and
  - h. other items as requested by classroom teacher.
2. The child's lunch/ bottles (if used) need to be sent each day. Juice, water, and/or whole milk are provided. If needed, lunches are stored in refrigerators 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, Diaper Genie refills, Ziploc bags, etc.

### **Lunches and Snacks**

Children should eat breakfast before they arrive in the morning. Lunches need to 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 are given mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Rise serves the following nutritional snacks: apple juice, applesauce, vanilla yogurt, graham crackers, peanut butter, Cheerios, Goldfish, milk, fruit, and crackers. Alternative snacks are sometimes used as part of the curriculum, often related to the weekly theme.

A daily snack menu is posted in each classroom. Snacks and lunches sent from home should follow guidelines both in nutritional value and safety.

Parents need to communicate with teachers about any dietary or religious restrictions and/or allergies. Parents of students who are in classrooms designated **nut free** are requested not to send lunch or snack items containing nut products. Written approval from a physician or a registered/licensed dietician is required if a child must be served a therapeutic or special diet. This includes tube feedings, Gatorade or other sports type drinks, and Pediasure or other meal replacement beverages.

Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care. All bottles, whether formula or breast milk must be sent ready to feed.

### **Insurance for Assistive Devices**

Rise cannot be held responsible for any lost, damaged or broken assistive devices, such as hearing aids, contact lenses, glasses, or iPads. We ask you to have adequate replacement insurance for such items should they become misplaced, damaged or broken.

### **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.

**Cowboy boots, sandals, or “Crocs” are not appropriate for active play. During warm weather, please do not send your child to school in open-toed shoes or flip flops to help prevent accidents and injuries.**

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 provided by the School are worn by children during messy art activities to help protect clothing.

### **Field Trips**

Throughout the year, field trips may be scheduled, based on 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 however, siblings under the age of 14 may not attend.

### **Medical Information**

Prior to admission of a child, parents will provide any pertinent medical records for the child. Prior to admission and **updated annually**, the medical information on the registration forms and the Physician’s Health Assessment must be submitted. The Physician’s Health Assessment Form provides the documentation of a physical examination by your child’s healthcare provider. Any changes in primary healthcare provider or insurance coverage should be communicated to the school. If a child requires any special healthcare procedures at school, such as prescription medications, enteral feeding, orthotics, over the counter medications, etc., parents will be required to have a *Special Healthcare Procedures Form* completed and signed by the child’s healthcare provider detailing this care.

Additionally, if the child has been diagnosed with any of the following medical conditions, an Action Plan completed and signed by the child’s healthcare provider and a parent must be provided.

- Asthma
- Diabetes or hypo/hyperglycemia issues
- Seizure Disorder
- Any allergy for which an Epi-Pen has been prescribed.

*\*Blank Action Plan Forms are available from the school nurse if needed.*

### **Immunization Requirements**

Immunizations must be current before a child can be enrolled in school and must remain current for the child to remain at school. An immunization record is required upon enrollment and updated as needed. In the event a parent has chosen to exempt any or all state required immunizations for their child, an original, notarized Texas Department of State Health Services Vaccine Exemption Affidavit must be provided. Please note that these children may be excluded from attending school in times of emergency or vaccine-preventable disease outbreak or epidemic.

## Medications

As much as possible, medications should be given at home rather than at school. The following procedures must be followed in the event a prescription or non-prescription medication needs to be administered during the school day:

- All medications must be delivered from the parent directly to the School Nurse or Director. Please do not send medications in your child's backpack or lunch kit.
- For any medications, parents must complete and sign a medication form upon delivery of the medication.
- A Prescription Medication Form (available from nurse or website) must be completed and signed by both a parent and the child's healthcare provider for prescription medication that must administered during school hours for more than 3 consecutive school days.
- Prescription medications must be in the original container and have appropriate pharmacy labels attached.
- Non-prescription drugs must be in the original container with the manufacturer's label intact. The medication will be administered according to package directions unless a signed order from the child's healthcare provider is provided. *Please note, many over-the-counter medications are not labeled for children under the age of two (i.e. Infant's Tylenol). In this case, a signed order for dosage from the child's healthcare provider must accompany the medication.*
- Non-prescription medication will not be administered at school for a period longer than 3 consecutive school days. If the need for medication still remains after this time period, it is an indication that the child needs to be seen by their healthcare provider.
- Medications will be secured in a locked cabinet out of reach of the children or in a locked refrigerator container. Medications will be administered by the School Nurse, Director, Teacher or Teacher Assistant. The staff will document the date, time, route and dosage each time medication is administered.
- Expired medications will not be administered.
- In the event a child's **emergency medication** (i.e. Epi-Pens, Diastat, rescue inhalers) expires, *the child will be excluded from attending school* until either a current, replacement supply is provided or a note is received from the child's healthcare provider indicating the medication has been discontinued.
- All medications must be picked up on or before the last school day. Any medications that remain at school after this time will be disposed of according to state guidelines.

## 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 an outside provider and provide the school with the results.



### 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 are able to participate fully in the school day. Exclusion from school will be based on the needs of the sick child and the other children in the classroom. In case of an outbreak of a communicable disease, and at the discretion of the Director, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children.

Parents must provide and keep updated home, work, and emergency phone numbers. Parents should notify the school of the times when they will not be at their regular address or phone number to ensure they may always be reached, not just in the case of an emergency.

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 have been any signs of the symptoms as stated under Illness (see exclusion guidelines on the next page)
- If the child has been exposed to any communicable disease
- If the child is taking any medication. This is especially important if the child is taking a new medication or in the event medication has been given in the morning prior to arriving at school

Please try to manage your child'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: Texas Department of State Health Services, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Center for Disease Control. 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:
  - Temperature of 100 degrees or greater

- 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
- Red or watery eyes, or eyes showing a yellow discharge
- Complaining of ear pain or ear leaking fluid
- A physician has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate they are no longer contagious.

**Children may return to school 24 hours from symptom onset and fever free provided symptoms are improving and without the use of symptom reducing medication.**

The Rise School enforces the same standards in preventing employees from working while sick.

Parents will be notified if their child becomes ill at school and must make arrangements for picking up their sick child in a timely manner. A child that is sent home due to illness must remain at home for at least 24 hours unless a clearance note is provided from the child's doctor. Please understand that due to the medical needs of some students, communicable illnesses put them at greater risk.

***Special note regarding anesthesia or hospitalization:*** A child must be kept home for at least one full day following any ER visit, discharge from hospitalization, or any surgical procedure involving more than light sedation. Children need this time to rest and recover regardless of the severity or the reason for medical attention. Because many of our children have ear tubes placed and/or an ABR performed, please ask the physician what type of sedation or anesthesia is planned. **Children who have a tonsillectomy must remain at home 7 consecutive days after the procedure.** Upon the child's return to school, a parent must check in with the School Nurse or Director to provide an update.

In the event lice and/or nits are discovered in a child's hair during the school day, the parent will be notified to pick up the child and provide treatment. The child may return to school the following day after treatment but must be checked by the school nurse before returning to class.

**Injury to a Student, Emergency Treatment, and Incident Reports**

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.

The Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention must be signed annually by parents. 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. If needed, the School Nurse or Teacher will notify the parent as soon as possible prior to pickup time. 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 provided *within 24 hours* for a parent signature and will be filed in the child's records. A copy will be provided upon request.

Staff members administering first aid will wear gloves if the injury involves broken skin, bleeding, and/or potential 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, School Nurse, Director of Education, 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 dispatched 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, School Nurse, or classroom teacher will follow-up with the parent regarding the status of the student's condition until the student returns to school.

### **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 Texas Children's Hospital Meyer Building, 1919 South Braeswood, 77030.
- Children and staff wash their hands as often as necessary according to health and safety guidelines.
- Mouthed and handled objects/toys are washed and sanitized between uses by the children.
- All classroom materials such as washcloths, bibs, and crib sheets are washed after a single use.
- All electrical outlets at The Rise School of Houston are shock proof.
- Diaper changing and toileting are performed in a separate area of the classroom. Non-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.
- Instructional staff and the Director are certified in adult, child and infant CPR and First Aid and use of an AED.
  - The Rise School of Houston maintains a limited stock of unassigned adult and pediatric epinephrine auto injectors (commonly referred to as “Epi-Pens”). This stock will be used to treat individuals experiencing an anaphylactic reaction to a previously undiagnosed allergen. It is not to be used for individuals for whom an epinephrine auto injector has been prescribed. A standing order protocol is in place and available upon request.

**A Licensed, Registered Nurse is on staff as the School Nurse. The Director (or designee) will act in the event she/he is unavailable at any given time.**

### **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 parking lot. If needed, parents will be called using cell phones to pick up their children.

### **Unscheduled Closings**

In case of severe weather, Rise will follow the schedule of the Houston Independent School District. If they close or open late, Rise will do the same. If the threat of inclement weather arises, parents should listen to local radio stations for school closings and times 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.

### **Tuition**

Tuition is based on the full year program costs with 12 equal monthly installments. A portion of the first month’s tuition is due upon enrollment and any remaining amount is due before 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 by the Board. A monthly tuition installment is charged based on the annual program costs per child. Tuition is to be paid on a monthly basis, **due by the 1st of each month**. After the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month, a **\$25.00 late fee will be charged** unless otherwise arranged with the Director. Anytime a check is returned unpaid by our financial institution, a \$15.00 fee will be assessed. For your convenience, you can utilize your bank’s automatic bill pay program to have payments mailed automatically each month. In May, parents of returning students 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. Students who are graduating or not returning to Rise are required to pay their final July tuition in advance in May. This advanced payment is required so all end of year paperwork can be finalized before the child’s last day of attendance.

**Tuition that is more than 45 days in arrears will result in the child's suspension from attending until payment is made. If payment is not received within 15 days of suspension the child must be withdrawn from the program.**

### **Financial Aid**

Financial aid is available for those who qualify. This aid could provide financial assistance from 15% up to 70% 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 complete the online Financial Aid application. The information is reviewed and the Executive Director will notify the family of the amount of financial aid to be applied to the student's tuition. All families who receive financial assistance for tuition must reapply before the start of each upcoming school year.

### **Confidentiality of Students Records**

A child's records are open only to the parent(s) or legal guardian, the Rise staff (including TCH 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.

### **Parent Meetings – Rise Parent Organization**

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 for parents is also held in September to provide additional information about the parent organization. Parent meetings typically held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month beginning in October. Planning for the upcoming year is completed in the summer.

### **Fundraising**

The 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 50% of the funding required to operate the school. The remaining 50% is achieved from grants, corporate and individual donations. The Development team at Rise hosts several fundraising events each year including Gifts from the Heart, Rise, Shine, and Swing Golf Classic, Rise and Shine Clay Shoot and Heart & Sole Luncheon. Please see the Development Director for questions regarding fundraising.

### **Relationship With Outside Therapists and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Programs**

Rise welcomes and encourages collaboration with area ECI and private therapy programs. However, because the Rise schedule is group structured and activity-based, Rise is unable to accommodate direct therapy visits during school hours (8:00 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.) Therapists are always welcome to work with children and their parents after 2:30 p.m. in the assessment room or playground and/or between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. in the Sunshine Room or playground. If the parent is unable to stay with the child during the therapy session, private therapists must complete a background check and fingerprint requirement since they will not be supervised by Rise staff while on campus.

### **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 attend the end-of-year conferences/meetings for all children moving into their classroom for the upcoming year.

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

Children who turn six prior to September 1 **must** transition from Rise to another school setting. A graduation ceremony and reception for those children moving to kindergarten 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
- Providing technical assistance to parents about the laws and regulations governing Special Education
- 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

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

A child may be terminated from The 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 (If removal from Rise must occur due to the child's need for more one to one support Rise will assist the family in transitioning to another program by identifying consultants and community resources to assist in determining the most appropriate placement for the child.).

### **Public Awareness**

We are very proud of The 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 and videos of the children and of the classes in accordance with written parental consent. Tours of the Rise program will be held regularly 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 or medicine. The Director must approve any research project completed at Rise. The parents must authorize the participation of their child in any specific projects.

### **Classroom Assistants**

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

### **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 weekly plans for the class. Parents will be responsible for cake, ice cream or other refreshments and for party decorations or party favors. *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.
- The Rise School of Houston 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, reminders, etc.).
- No child should ever be left unattended in an automobile. Please call the School's main telephone line (713-532-7473) if assistance is needed.
- Siblings who come to school when Rise students are dropped off or picked up are to remain with their parent(s) at all times.
- Children will not be released unless there is a properly installed car seat in the vehicle they will be traveling in.
- The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) requires parents to be notified of unsafe children's products issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC). Many CSPC recalls are e-mailed to parents/caregivers and a list of these items can be found in the *Keeping Children Safe* notebook located in the front lobby.

### **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.

# The Rise School of Houston

## Calendar 2022-2023

Monday, August 15- Wednesday, August 17	New Staff Orientation **No Classes**
Thursday, August 18- Wednesday, August 24	Staff In-Service **No Classes**
Thursday, August 25	Children Return
Monday, September 5	Labor Day Holiday
Friday, October 7	Staff In-service**No Classes**
Monday, October 10	Staff In-service **No Classes**
Friday, November 18	Staff In-Service **No Classes*
Monday, November 21- Friday, November 25	Thanksgiving Holiday
Monday, December 19- Friday, January 6	Winter Holiday
Monday, January 9	Staff In-Service **No Classes**
Tuesday, January 10	Children Return
Monday, January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
Monday, February 20	Staff In-Service **No Classes**
Monday, March 13- Friday, March 17	Spring Break
Friday, April 7	Easter Holiday
Monday, April 10	Staff In-Service **No Classes**
Monday, May 29- Friday, June 9	Summer Break I
Monday, June 12	Staff In-Service **No Classes**
Tuesday, June 13	Children Return
Monday, June 19	Juneteenth Holiday
Monday, July 3- Tuesday, July 4	Independence Day Holiday
Thursday, July 20	Last Day for Children
Friday, July 21	Last Day for Staff
Monday, July 24- Friday, August 11	Summer Break II
Monday, August 14- Wednesday, August 16	New Staff Orientation **No Classes**
Thursday, August 17- Wednesday, August 23	Staff In-Service **No Classes**
Thursday, August 24	Children Return