

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Latch Key! We look forward to caring for your children. Please read the parent handbook and sign the bottom of this page. Return the signed and dated page by the end of the first week.

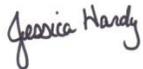
The Pearl Griffin Memorial Latch Key Program is a unique program for children ages 4 years old in Pre-K through Sixth Grade. We provide special afterschool care for children whose parents work outside of the home during afterschool hours.

Children enrolled in the Latch Key Program are loved and cared for by students of Howard Payne University under my direct supervision. Your children will receive many things at Latch Key: TLC, supervised indoor and outdoor activities, help with homework, birthday parties, nutritious snacks and special visitors.

Please take time to read all the policies in this handbook. We have developed several policies to let you know our guidelines. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 646-2138 or stop by my office.

Most importantly, I am here for the benefit of your child. Continued efforts on your part to abide by these policies will assure we can and will do the job to the best of our ability. Thank you for your cooperation in these matters.

Sincerely,



Jessica Hardy, Director

**I have read and understand all policies in the parent handbook.**

**I give the Latch Key Program permission to use my child's picture in the newspaper as needed for publicity.**

**YES            NO (please circle one)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Child/Children's Name**



## **HISTORY**

The Pearl Griffin Memorial Latch Key Program began in 1983 as a local mission project of the Union Presbyterian Church in Brownwood. At that time, volunteers devoted their afternoons to giving special care to a small group of young children. Since that time, physical changes have taken place to best meet the needs of the children. In 1991, the program expanded to include the First Christian Church. In 1995, the older children met at the Family Services Center. In January 1999, the entire program moved to one location, First Christian Church.

## **MISSION**

Our mission is to provide working parents with the opportunity for their children to receive quality care.

## **PURPOSE**

The Pearl Griffin Memorial Latch Key Program is a non-denominational afterschool program for the Brownwood Independent School District children from low income families. Through love and understanding children discover their own worth and develop values such as respect, honesty and fairness.

## **FUNDING**

Latch Key is a non-profit program. There is no organizational sponsor. Funding comes from local organizations, foundations, churches; The Brown County United Way and individual donations are also received in the form of memorials and honorariums.

## **LICENSING**

Latch Key is licensed through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. We must ensure we are up to the standards set forth by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. If you see something that needs attention please let the Latch Key Director know as soon as possible so that your child receives the quality child care they deserve.

## **STAFF**

Latch Key is staffed by Howard Payne University work study students. Our staff must submit to and pass criminal history checks through State and FBI security databases.

## **ADMISSIONS**

Families must fill out an application for each child every year. New applications will be available at the end of each school year. There is no cost to families who qualify. If classes are filled the child will be placed on a waiting list. Qualifications are that the children must be in Brownwood ISD, qualify for free or reduced lunches and parents must be working or going to school during

after-school hours. Applications must be completed and returned with current shot records and current check stub for parents. Incomplete applications will not be processed and child will be placed on our waiting list until completed. Our program begins the Tuesday after Labor Day each September and ends with the last day of school in May. Families who meet the qualifications are eligible to participate in the program regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion or political belief.

### **WAITING LIST**

If you have a child on the waiting list they will be enrolled in the order of available openings in order of date received. If we do not get an opening for your child during the school year you will need to fill out a new application for the following school year. Filling out applications in May can prevent you from going back on a waiting list.

### **CURRICULUM**

Latch Key offers a child-centered curriculum. Developmentally appropriate activities are made available and the children are motivated to do the activities by their own interest and needs. Some staff like to pray before meals with their students, as well as have occasional Christian based lessons. If the teacher plans to do this during the year they will have a sheet for you to sign giving your approval. If you choose not to have your child participate in these activities please let the teacher know as well as the director so that we can ensure that these activities don't happen. There will be no difference made in how your children are treated if you choose not to participate.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

We will have a newsletter available monthly letting parents know what is going on for that month. There is important information on these newsletters. On occasion an extra flyer will be handed out if we have something come up we need to let parents know about. We also have a Facebook page for Latch Key. If you would like to add us on Facebook please feel free. Through our Facebook page we have a group for our parents that reminders will be posted to that is closed to the public. Please keep all information on this page regarding Latch Key only!

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

There are occasions during the school year that we have people from the community come in for special events. If there is something in particular that your child is afraid of please let the office know. We have fire trucks with fire marshal's specially trained dog, ambulances, helicopters, Santa, as well as other events. During special events you may be asked to help donate goodies. When we do ask for help in special events it is very low cost, usually candy or cookies. During our fundraiser hamburger supper we will ask for homemade baked goods.

## **HOMEWORK TIME**

Homework time is available to children in all grades. Please let your child's teacher know if your child needs to be doing their homework at Latch Key. We offer time after snack for the children to do homework or read quietly while the others do their homework before the planned activity for the day.

## **CUB SCOUTS/GIRL SCOUTS**

Scouts are offered at no charge to Latch Key children. If you are interested in signing your child up for either Cub Scouts or Girl Scout applications are available and turned in to the Latch Key office. You must fill out an application to enroll your child in scouts. Meetings are held for one hour a week during Latch Key hours. On special occasions there may be an event outside of normal meeting times but participation in the extra events is not required if there is a conflict of schedules. If your child(ren) are registered in scouts please add Latch Key on Facebook so you may be added to our group so we can make you aware of events for them.

## **SNACKS**

Latch Key participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Nutritious snacks are served to the children daily when they arrive. Snacks will be offered to every child. Any leftover snacks will be placed on the counter by the sink across from Miss Jessica's office. Your child may get one snack if there is one up there when they go to leave.

## **SPECIAL DIET REQUIREMENTS**

If your child requires a special diet Latch Key will need a prescription from the doctor stating that a special diet is required. This prescription needs to indicate what foods cannot be eaten as well as what they must be replaced with. The prescription must state the replacement in order for Latch Key to provide a different snack. This is a requirement of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. If the doctor note specifies replacement then Latch Key can provide this. If it does not and just tells what cannot be eaten/drunk then parents will need to provide replacement.

Example: Lactose Intolerant would need to specify what type of milk the children can drink on milk days (in order for Latch Key to provide it must be 1% of any other kind of milk). Gluten Intolerant would need to specify wheat free products.

Just remember it needs to be specific!

### **LATE FEE**

Children must be picked up every day **by 5:30**. Please call if you are delayed due to situations out of your control. There will be a late fee of \$2.00 for every five minutes per child. The fee is due by the following Friday. *Each family is allowed 5 late fees per school year before being dismissed from the program.*

### **HEALTH POLICY**

Children may not attend Latch Key if the child:

- 1) Has a temperature of 100.4 or above
- 2) Has a communicable disease
- 3) Has vomiting or diarrhea
- 4) Does not feel well enough to participate in usual daily activities.

If any of these symptoms exist you will be notified by phone and you will need to make arrangement to pick up your child within thirty (30) minutes.

### **MEDICATION**

If your child requires medication during Latch Key hours you, the parent, must bring the medication in an original bottle from the pharmacy with a pharmacy label identifying the child's name, name of medication, current date and dosage on it. You must also fill out a permission form for the program to administer the medication.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

In case of an emergency we will contact medical emergency services and then call parents and inform them of what is going on. We will then call our Latch Key Board President. In the event that we must leave the premises we will take the children by staff vehicles to Union Presbyterian Church at 700 Fisk Avenue. If we do relocate there will be a note left on the front door and parents will be called as soon as possible.

### **NON-MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

If your child is injured during Latch Key hours your child's teacher will fill out an incident report for you to sign acknowledging the incident. Once this form is signed it will be placed with your child's files.

### **DAYS/HOURS OF OPERATION**

Latch Key has the same schedule as Brownwood ISD. The hours are from 2:45 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Latch Key is closed on teacher workdays, all school holidays and summer.

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF CHILDREN**

Latch Key is responsible for the children in their care from the time they arrive off the bus until they are signed out by a responsible party. Once the child has been signed out they become the responsibility of the adult that signed them out.

### **DELIVERY OF CHILDREN**

Children will be dropped off by the Brownwood ISD Bus each afternoon. Latch Key does not provide transportation for the children. If the buses are running then your child will be dropped off with us unless you have let the school know otherwise. Children must arrive on the bus, we cannot allow drop offs from other modes of transportation. Latch Key is only responsible for children enrolled in Latch Key. If your child has a friend coming home with them that is not enrolled please make arrangements to pick them up from school or after Latch Key. The friend cannot come on the bus with them.

### **SUSPENSION FROM THE BUS**

If your child is suspended from the bus they are not allowed to be dropped off at Latch Key. If they are unable to ride the bus you will have to make arrangements for them to be picked up and cared for after school. If you have more than one child and your other children can still ride the bus they are welcome to still come to Latch Key.

### **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Children may be picked up by the person/persons on the pick up list ONLY! If you need to add someone to the list please call or come by and let the office know. Failure to do so will cause delay and frustration in your child being picked up because we will not let your child go with someone not on the pickup list. If someone not on the pick-up list comes to pick up your child and we cannot reach you we will not allow your child to leave. If someone new is picking your child up they must provide a photo ID to be photocopied and placed with your child's records. Anyone picking up children must be 18 years old or older and must sign the children out in their classroom. If there is any reason to feel that your child is not safe to leave with the individual picking them up we will not release the child.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE/EMPLOYMENT**

Please notify us of any changes in address, phone numbers or employment. It is important to have the correct information in case we need to contact you when your child is sick or in case of an emergency arises.

### **ABSENCES**

Please call 646-2138 to let us know if your child will not be attending Latch Key. This will reduce concern that they may have missed the bus or gotten on the wrong bus.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Acceptable behavior is encouraged by giving positive verbal rewards. This reinforces a child's good feeling about his/her behavior and serves as an example to the other children to act in such a way to receive this praise. Asking a child to stop and think about his/her unpleasant behavior enables that child to work at self-control.

If a child is not cooperating in a group situation, the child may be seated by a teacher and reminded of acceptable behavior.

Removal from the group for a period of time is the next tactic used for a child who continually demonstrates unacceptable behavior. This time out is not a punishment rather a time when a child may calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is asking for and what is considered appropriate behavior.

All children will be spoken to and treated with respect. At no point will Latch Key ever give spankings for any reason! Parents do not have an option to give us permission to give spankings.

If behavior problems persist, the parent will be ask to a conference.

Discipline policy

- 1) Positive reinforcement
- 2) Redirection
- 3) Time-out

Steps 1-3 will be used before sending a child to the office, unless behavior is extreme or harmful to other children and staff.

- 5) Time out in the office (extreme consistent uncontrolled behavior)
- 6) Parent Conference
- 7) Suspended for 3 days
- 8) Termination of care.

## **PARENTAL DISCIPLINE**

If behavior is serious enough we will call a parent as a last resort to pick up the child. According to State regulations parents may not spank children on the premises of Latch Key. If a parent feels that the discipline for the behavior should be handled with a spanking they will need to

remove their child from the Latch Key property. If a parent is seen using physical punishment the Latch Key personnel is obligated by law to report it as child abuse.

### **BULLYING/SWEARING**

Bullying will not be tolerated! Please encourage your children to talk to their teacher or director so it can be handled. We will exhaust all efforts to stop bullying. If we get reports of your children bullying other students we will follow the following procedure:

- 1) Trip to the office
- 2) Discuss with parents
- 3) Suspended for 2 days
- 4) Dismissed from the program.

### **Bullying includes but not limited to:**

- 1) Continually teasing/name calling someone after being ask to stop.
- 2) Making fun of another student.
- 3) Making racist comments
- 4) Inappropriate sexual comments
- 5) Spreading rumors
- 6) Anything physical

Swearing is not allowed. If your child is caught swearing they will have to write sentences in the office. Parents will be notified of the incident each time. After 4 offenses your child will be dismissed from the program.

### **TOYS/VIDEO GAMES**

Please leave personal toys and video games at home or in backpacks. Personal items cause conflicts among children and are sometimes difficult to keep track of. Latch Key is not responsible for replacing personal items if lost or stolen.

### **CELL PHONES**

If your child has a cell phone it must be kept in backpacks or left in the office while at Latch Key. Latch Key is not responsible for replacing cell phones if they are not kept in a safe location.

### **PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Children attending Latch Key need to be able to attend to their personal hygiene by themselves. We understand accidents do happen from time to time and will assist when needed. **After the third accident your child will be dismissed until toilet trained.**

### **ANIMALS ON PREMISES**

Animals are not allowed on the premises. If you bring pets with you please do not bring them in the building with you. According to State Regulations and Health Codes animals cannot be on the premises around the children without prior notice to all families and vaccination records on file in the Latch Key office. This is not limited to dogs and cats, this for anything not human!

### **DIRECTOR**

The director is available to discuss any concerns at any time between 10:00-5:30 Monday-Friday. If you need to arrange another time to meet with the director please stop by when picking up your child to make arrangements. You can stop by the office or you can call at 646-2138.

### **LICENSING**

If you wish to contact the local Licensing office, call 325-646-7051. If you wish to contact the FPS child abuse hotline, call 800-252-5400. Minimum Standards and most recent licensing inspections reports can be seen by going to [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org).

### **GANG-FREE ZONE**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

### **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Director and teachers are required by law to report to Child Protective Services of any child they suspect suffers from abuse and/or neglect within 24 hours of suspicion.

Child Abuse hotline 1-800-252-5400

Child Protective services 646-0541

### **PROCEDURE TO FILE A COMPLAINT**

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this childcare center is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

If a participant thinks he or she has been discriminated against, they may file a complaint. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 1 (866) 632-9992 (toll free), 1 (800) 877-8339 (Federal Relay Service) or 1 (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Speaking Assistance). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

December 2014

# Building for the Future

This child care center receives Federal cash assistance to serve healthy meals to your children. Good Nutrition today means a stronger tomorrow!

Meals served here must meet nutrition requirements established by USDA's **Child and Adult Care Food Program**

Questions? Concerns?

Call USDA at **1-866-873-2263**

**or**

Food and Nutrition at **1-800-TELL-TDA**

(835-5832)

**or**

Your child care center at

Pearl Griffin Memorial Latch Key Program

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**