

**FIRST LUTHERAN
SCHOOL - BENTON
School Handbook**

2025-2026

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

First Lutheran School, Benton provides an education which is comparable in quality to the best public elementary schools. In addition, *FLSB* is wholly consistent with a traditional biblical worldview. While confessionally Lutheran, *FLSB* also serves the larger Christian community by including religious instruction that emphasizes the narrative of Scripture and the fundamental tenets of traditional Trinitarian Christianity.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

First Lutheran School, Benton is committed to providing excellent elementary education. To accomplish this, we employ only well-trained teachers and maintain small classroom sizes.

First Lutheran School, Benton endeavors to serve Christian families of all traditional, trinitarian denominations as ecumenically as possible. Religious education at First Lutheran School, Benton will focus on what all traditional Christian denominations share in common. First of all, of course, we will focus on the Scriptures (and in particular, the biblical narrative). When it comes to doctrine, our focus will be on the fundamental doctrines articulated in the Nicene Creed, all of which are shared across denominations. (For example, we will teach our children that we worship one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Also, of course, we will teach them about the incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and his return in glory). The moral teachings of the Scriptures as traditionally taught in the Church will also be upheld, including traditional teaching regarding marriage, family, sex, and gender.

First Lutheran School, Benton is not designed to make Lutherans out of other kinds of Christians, but to help all kinds of Christians become stronger and better Christians. Having said that, we are a Lutheran School. Therefore, what we teach and how we worship will be consistent with confessional Lutheranism. At the elementary school age, this will rarely present a problem, but should differences arise, we leave it to the parents to guide their children privately according to their own confessional or denominational beliefs.

A healthy Christian family is active in a Christian congregation. While congregational membership is not required to enroll at First Lutheran School, Benton, families that have no congregational affiliation, or only a nominal one, are strongly encouraged to become active in a local Christian congregation.

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Prov. 22:6

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

First Lutheran School, Benton does not discriminate on the basis age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, or handicap in the administration of its educational policies, extra-curricular, and other school-administered programs.

CUSTODIAL POLICY

It is the policy of First Lutheran School, Benton to afford custodial and non-custodial parents the same access to their children and the same rights and responsibilities toward their children as long as it does not violate any court approved decree. Non-custodial parents are given access to any and all information with regard to their children's attendance and participation in First Lutheran School, Benton as long as it does not violate any court approved decree. It is also the school's policy to allow the non-custodial parents free access to their children during the school day for activities, lunch, and transportation to and from school as long as it does not violate any court approved decree. Any exceptions to this policy need to be provided to the office, in writing, with either a court order or an agreement signed between the parents.

ACCREDITATION

First Lutheran School, Benton has associate membership with ANSAA (Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association) and is working toward accreditation with NLSA (National Lutheran School Accreditation).

ADMINISTRATION

First Lutheran School, Benton is owned and operated by First Lutheran Church and is governed by a school board of five First Lutheran Church members, plus the pastor and a church council representative. Pastor Burns serves as the acting principal while we pursue a full-time principal. Questions regarding policies may be directed to your child's teacher or the principal.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

First Lutheran School, Benton is happy to consider having any families who wish to provide a Christian education for their children. To be considered for admission to First Lutheran School, Benton's kindergarten, a child must have reached the age of five no later than August 1st of the year of entrance. A birth certificate is required to be on file for all students. All entering kindergarten students must take a readiness assessment and be recommended for kindergarten by the kindergarten teacher. First graders must show they have

completed kindergarten or are likely to graduate if the year is not yet over. A report card or letter from the school on official letterhead will suffice to demonstrate qualification.

All new students entering grades one and above shall be required to take an academic assessment or provide recent standardized test scores from their previous school(s). Parents or guardians of new students must sign a release form allowing First Lutheran School, Benton to request all past academic and related records from the most recent school(s) attended. Parents or guardians must provide shot records demonstrating their child has received all required immunizations. In cases where families have opted not to have the child receive a required immunization, an immunization exemption letter from the health department must be submitted.

In January of each year, materials for re-enrollment are distributed to each currently enrolled First Lutheran School, Benton family to enable the school to determine the number of students who will attend the next school year.

Registration fees are to be submitted with the re-enrollment form in order to reserve a place for the returning student(s). Returning students will have first priority for enrollment upon payment of the registration fee. Registration fees are non-refundable. After January 31st, enrollment will be open to the public.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

The acceptance of students at First Lutheran School, Benton will be decided based on the following factors:

1. The school's resources and abilities to help the student grow spiritually and academically.
2. The student's likelihood of interacting with the present student population in a manner that benefits growth of some of the other students, or, at the least, does not significantly detract from the growth of other students.
3. The willingness and cooperation of the parents and/or guardians to abide by the content of the school handbook.
4. The willingness and cooperation of the parents and/or guardians to work with the student's teacher(s) for the benefit of the student. The cooperation of the parents and/or guardians in making tuition and fee

payments on schedule.

5. The final decision on student acceptance lies with the principal.
6. Accepted students will initially be on a probationary period of sixty (60) school days of actual attendance, during which time the principal will review the criteria to ensure it is adequately being met. At any time during the probationary period, the principal may decide that the student is not a good fit, inform the parents of his or her decision, and explain the basis for it. Unless the situation is severe, attempts should be made to allow reasonable time (e.g., 1-2 weeks) for the parents to locate another venue for the student's education prior to dismissing the student.

RATES & FEES

Registration Fee	\$500 (\$100 at registration, \$100 at Open House, \$300 through EFA, or if no EFA, at Open House)
Monthly Tuition	\$656 (for ten months—August through May)

LEARNS (EFA)

Most students will have their tuition paid through *Educational Funding Accounts* as per the *Arkansas Learns Act*. For those who do not qualify for this state funding, the following payment options are available. (If your child does not qualify for an EFA, please ask us about the *ACE Scholarship*.)

Payment Options

1. We can set up an automatic draft from your bank account. If you choose this option, we will need you to provide us with a voided check for your bank account. This option allows you to pay the annual tuition over a ten- month period (August-May).
 - a. We can draft the full amount of your monthly bill on either the 5th or the 20th of each month according to your preference.
 - b. We can draft half of the amount of your monthly bill on the 5th of each month and the remainder of your monthly bill on the 20th of each month.
2. You may pay tuition using cash or a check on a quarterly basis. This option would require payment on or before the first day of each academic quarter (Aug. 13, Oct. 13, Jan. 5, and Mar. 11).

3. You may pay the full annual tuition by August 13th and receive a 5% discount for the year.

Tuition bank drafts and payments not received by the due date will incur a \$25 penalty fee. Payments that exceed two weeks late will incur an additional 5% late fee on the amount owed. Payments not received within one month of the due date will result in a letter being sent to the family and copied to the school board. The school board will determine an appropriate course of action in such cases.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Regular and punctual school attendance is expected and is important for a student's success in school. Punctuality assists the classroom teacher in maintaining a daily routine. It is also a necessary lifetime habit of responsibility and courtesy.

Being Tardy

Classes run from 8:15 am to 3:30 pm. Students who are not in their proper classroom and seated in their assigned seats by 8:15 will be counted as tardy. Five tardies will count as one absence.

Absenteeism Procedures

We do not categorize absences as "excused" or "unexcused" since any kind of absence, regardless of its cause, results in the same loss of classroom instruction time and takes a toll on the student's learning. We understand that there are times absences are unavoidable. In such cases we require the following procedures:

1. Parents/guardians are to call or email the school's administrative assistant as soon as it is known the child will not be present at school.
2. Upon the student's return, the student or parent/guardian must provide the office with a written, signed parental explanation of the dates or times and the reason for the absence. Any other documentation that substantiates the reason for the absence must also be turned into the office. This would include things like doctor notes, or in the case of a death in the family, a funeral program, etc.
3. Except for extenuating circumstances, any assignments that were due,

or tests that were to be taken during the student's absence will be due upon his or her first day of return, assuming such dates were made known prior to the student's absence. Tests or assignments that were announced during the time that the student was absent (i.e., tests and assignments the student was uninformed about due to an absence) will be communicated on the first day of the student's return. The student will then be given the same number of days as his or her peers were given to complete the assignment or prepare for the test.

Absenteeism Consequences

Absenteeism carries with it a costly natural consequence: a loss of learning. The statistics speak for themselves: students who are absent from school very often end up missing important instruction, putting them at a disadvantage. Not only do absent students miss what learning occurred during their absence; they continue to learn less even upon their return. They are often not able to comprehend the new instruction as well since they missed the learning that provided a basis for the new instruction. Please make every effort to protect your child's education and future by taking responsibility for his or her regular school attendance. Schedule appointments so that they encroach as little as possible on school days and hours. Please refrain from keeping a student home for an entire day when a partial day would suffice for the circumstances. Vacations should be scheduled for weeks when school is not in session.

If a student accumulates six to seven absences in a semester, the school will mail a formal letter to the parents/guardians to remind them of their child's attendance status and the school's attendance policy. If a student accumulates nine to ten absences in a semester, a conference will be conducted with the parents/guardians, the student, and school personnel to remind the family about the seriousness of the student's attendance status and the school's attendance policy. A plan will be outlined to prevent future absenteeism with the understanding that excessive absenteeism without reasonable cause will require the school to contact a truancy officer.

When extenuating circumstances regarding a period of absenteeism are known ahead of time, the parents or guardians may consult with the principal. The principal may make allowance in such cases as long as arrangements are made ahead of time to ensure the student will have a way of making up for lost instruction time. This exception can only be made in cases in which sufficient notice is provided, there is reasonable cause for the absence in the opinion of the principal, and the student actually takes all

necessary steps to compensate for the lost instructional time.

A student must be present at least six (6) hours of instructional time to be counted present all day. A student must be present at least three (3) hours of instructional time to be counted present one-half day. Students will be counted tardy if checked in after 8:15 am, but within the first hour of the instructional day or checked out within the last hour of the instructional day. A student arriving more than one (1) hour late or checking out more than one (1) hour early will be counted present one-half day.

Re-enrollment for the following year may be denied if it is determined by the administration that there is a spirit of non-cooperation regarding the school's attendance policy.

Leaving School Grounds

First Lutheran School, Benton is a closed campus. Students are not permitted to leave the campus prior to dismissal time without written permission from a parent or guardian. If it is known ahead of time that a student needs to depart campus prior to 3:30 pm, the parent/guardian may send a signed note explaining the time and reason for the early dismissal. If no note is provided ahead of time, students will only be released to the care of the parent or guardian when that person comes into the office and signs the early check-out list. Except for emergency situations, a phone call is not sufficient to release a student to a person on the *Authorized to Pick Up List* prior to dismissal time. Written documentation is required for early dismissals and leaving campus both for the safety of the student and to protect the school from liability. Please ensure that the office has the names of persons whom you authorize to pick up your child in case you are not able to do so. We must have your signature accompanying this authorization. Also, please update the office anytime you need to make changes regarding persons authorized to pick up your child. We will also need your signature for such changes. We take your child's safety with the utmost seriousness.

EXTENDED CARE

School begins at 8:15 am. Students may come to school as early as 7:00 am for our *Before Care* program.

School dismisses at 3:30 pm at which time authorized adults should be on campus to pick up their child(ren). Please exercise extreme caution driving in the parking lot at this time since small children are present. A fifteen-minute grace period is provided for children to be picked up from school. Students

who have not been picked up from school by 3:45 pm will be taken to the *After Care* program. *After Care* is designed to assist working parents. It is not to be used for playdates with other children.

Extended Care Rates

The rate for extended care is \$3.50 per half hour. Any fraction of a half hour will be charged the half hour rate. For example, the account of a child picked up at 4:30 pm (one hour of extended care) will be charged \$7.00. The account of a child picked up at 4:35 pm will be charged \$10.50. (A five-minute grace period will be permitted for fractional half hours as long as it is not habitual).

After 6:00 pm, accounts will be charged \$1.00 per minute past the hour. Please do not be late beyond 6:00 pm for the sake of our employees' personal schedules.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

A parent/guardian signature is required during drop off at *Before Care* and at pick up for *After Care*. Parents are required to enter the school building in order to provide their signature. Students may not simply be "dropped off" or "picked up" at the school entrance without signing for extended care.

Activities

The *Before Care* program will be a time for students to read, complete homework, or enjoy activities in the classroom supervised by the instructor. The *After Care* program will be a time for students to begin homework, have a healthy snack, and enjoy indoor and/or outdoor activities supervised by the instructor.

Early Dismissal, School Closings, Holidays

There will be no *After Care* program held on early dismissal days and no extended care on school closure days. Please refer to the school calendar for a complete list of early dismissals, school closings, and holidays.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In case of school closing due to inclement weather, we will follow the Benton district's recommendations. If Benton schools are closed, we are closed also. Listen to local radio and television stations for school closings. Parents should consult the school calendar for particulars. First Lutheran School, Benton will run closure notices on local news networks, and a voice recording will be left on the school answering machine. School closures will also be listed on our website (www.flsbenton.com) and our Facebook page.

VEHICLES

Those driving motor vehicles on the campus of First Lutheran School, Benton when school is in session or children are present are required to exercise extreme caution and remain alert so as to avoid striking a pedestrian. There is to be no sudden acceleration or “peeling out,” and speeds must be kept slow enough to demonstrate that serious caution is being exercised. When dropping off or picking up students at the beginning or end of the school day, please park your vehicle in a parking space if more than a minute is necessary to load or unload. Otherwise, traffic becomes backed up and creates difficulty for others, especially during rainy weather. Please follow any directions and/or signs that are present for directing traffic during drop-off and pick-up times.

VISITORS

All visitors to the school must report to the school office before visiting any class or teacher.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Students may bring a snack which may only be consumed at a designated snack time or at lunch. Parents/guardians are responsible to ensure their children bring a healthy and adequate lunch to school each day. We highly recommend a nutritious snack and lunch (as well as a wholesome breakfast) be provided for students. Children’s eating habits have a significant effect on their capacity to concentrate and to learn.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SERVICE HOURS

First Lutheran School, Benton depends on the time and talents of its parents to assist in keeping the school and its property operating smoothly and to keep tuition costs from rising unnecessarily. First Lutheran School, Benton parents or guardians are asked to complete works of service that benefit the school. Works of service may include such things as participating in building improvement (painting, cleaning, repairing), escorting students on a field trip, helping with fundraising, helping in the library, serving on a committee, coordinating an event, etc.

The parent/guardian service hour requirement is twenty (20) hours per family. Families may complete the service hours through one or more parents/guardians. For families who have more than one student attending First Lutheran School, Benton, it is only necessary to fulfill the number of hours that would be associated with one child.

Service hours enable parents to be more involved with the school. Students

whose parents are involved in their school are more likely to succeed in school. Service hours also set a great example to our students whom we also ask to serve as part of growing their Christian character. And service hours enable First Lutheran School, Benton to control costs which benefit us all. If, for some reason, a family is unable to complete the appropriate number of service hours during the year, the option exists of paying fifteen dollars per hour in lieu of completing the service hours. Please be sure to check in with the office prior to doing your service hours and have your service hours documented in the office each day you contribute service to First Lutheran School, Benton. At the end of the school year, any outstanding service hours that have not been completed will be converted to a fifteen-dollar charge per hour and will be added to the family's account. We thank you for supporting your child's school with both your time and your finances.

STUDENT RECORDS

Parents or legal guardians have the right to inspect their child's permanent record file. Please schedule an appointment with the school office if you wish to do this.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

If a student withdraws or is dismissed from school, the following requirements must be met in order for his or her report card and/or transcript to be released:

1. All school texts, library books, and any school property is returned in acceptable condition.
2. The office is notified of details pertaining to the withdrawal using the school's withdrawal form.
3. All fees and tuition are paid up to the time of withdrawal.

Official transcripts will be forwarded upon completion of all financial business.

ACADEMICS

First Lutheran School, Benton's educational standards seek to fulfill all requirements of the state of Arkansas, as well as seeking to fulfill the accreditation requirements of the Arkansas Non-public School Accreditation Association (ANSAA) and National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA). Educational standards and curriculum are reviewed on a regular basis, and changes are made periodically in accordance with our commitment to continuous school improvement.

Christian Integration

First Lutheran School, Benton educates its students such that the beliefs and values of God's Word, the Bible, are integrated into the learning. Children attending our school receive daily religious instruction as part of the curriculum. Weekly chapel services are also held. Chapel is conducted under the supervision of the school's principal and/or the pastor of First Lutheran Church.

Report Cards

Standards-based report cards are issued quarterly for all students. Report cards for the first, second, and third quarters are sent home and/or emailed. Parents should sign and return these reports to indicate that they have reviewed the child's report card. The fourth quarter report cards are given to parents on the last day of school once it is determined that the family's accounts are paid up to date.

Parent-Teacher Communication

It is a fact that frequent parent-teacher communication has a significant impact on student success. We have several avenues for you to keep abreast of what is going on in your child's academic life. We encourage you to take advantage of these. It is always best to deal with any issues of concern with your child's academics earlier rather than later.

Conferences

All parents/guardians will be scheduled for a parent-teacher conference with their child's teacher during the first and third quarters. Parents/guardians may always request additional conferences with their child's teacher as needed. Please plan to attend these important conferences.

Gradelink

First Lutheran School, Benton uses the Gradelink student information system. You are able to go online at any time and see your child's attendance, progress, and upcoming assignment and test dates that have been posted. If you have not received your username and password for your Gradelink account, please contact the office to obtain these. We encourage parents/guardians to check their child's academic progress on Gradelink on at least a weekly basis.

Website and Email

The website for First Lutheran School, Benton is www.flsbenton.com. You can find recent news and parent resources and teacher email addresses on this site. We also have a Facebook page.

Standardized Testing

Each year, schools across the country administer a series of standardized tests in order to assess the knowledge and skill levels of students in the core subject areas. First Lutheran School, Benton uses the *Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP)* testing in the fall, winter, and spring in order to monitor student growth through the school year. The scores and results of these assessments are distributed to the parents. In order to ensure that the assessments provide an accurate measure of your child's ability, it is important that your child gets a solid night's rest on nights prior to the assessments, and that he or she has a full and nutritious breakfast on the mornings of the assessments. First Lutheran School, Benton uses the data from these assessments to help inform our teaching decisions and areas of needed focus, so please do enable your child to perform at his or her optimum level. Please be aware that although standardized tests serve a valuable purpose, at First Lutheran School, Benton, we conduct various types of assessments frequently through the year so that we have reliable data to inform us how we need to adjust our teaching to the needs of each child on a regular basis. Our philosophy of assessment is one of seeking continual growth and improvement for each child as opposed to heavy dependence on a system of competing with other student populations on norm-referenced tests or categorizing and labeling students based on arbitrary levels of proficiency or "cut-scores" on criterion-referenced tests.

Retention and Promotion

Students will advance to the next grade level at the end of the school year after satisfactorily completing the course of studies required in their present grade. Students who do not demonstrate competence at their grade level could be retained in the same grade for another year in order to enable them to catch up and succeed. Retention would occur only in consultation with the parents and when the evidence is clear that this is what is in the best interests of the student. Retention is never our first option. We seek to remediate students within their current grade-level. Retention is not a frequent occurrence, but at the lower levels of elementary school, it can be an option that best meets the student's academic and/or social needs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Requirements

Each child must have all required immunizations before the start of the school year. Contact your family doctor or the local public health department for details. In cases where families have opted not to have the child receive a required immunization, an immunization exemption letter from the health department must be submitted.

Health Screenings

Various student health screenings may be conducted during the year, and current health records are kept for each child. Such screenings may include hearing, vision, and scoliosis checks.

Illness Policy

In order to prevent the spread of any illness, do not send a child to school under any of these circumstances: The child . . .

- has had a fever in the last twenty-four hours
- has vomited in the last twenty-four hours
- has a rash (other than allergy-related)
- has a red or sore throat
- has red, running, or swollen eyes (other than allergy-related)
- has an illness requiring antibiotics, and has not yet been taking them for twenty-four hours
- has diarrhea
- has an untreated condition of head lice

Accidents

In the event your child requires medical attention other than mild first aid, you will be notified immediately. For this reason, please keep the Emergency Medical Form in the office up to date at all times.

Medications

Medication to be administered to a child must be given to the office by the parents or guardian. All medicine must be administered by the school staff and will be stored in the office. The medication must be in an appropriately labeled container from the physician or pharmacy. A written notice must accompany the medication detailing the name of the drug, the proper dosage, and the time interval and/or circumstances in which the medication should be administered.

In order for a student to be excused from physical education or recess, a written notice from a parent or guardian is needed. After three days of being excused from physical education or recess, a note from a physician or authorized medical person must be provided for the child to continue being excused from physical activity.

Head Lice Policy

Periodic headlice checks will be conducted. Any child infected with lice will be sent home. All children present in school on the date the lice are discovered will be checked for the presence of lice in their hair. Written notification will be sent home to all families in the school informing them that lice have been discovered. The parent(s) of the child found to be infected will be notified to treat the condition immediately. Assurance that the proper medication has been administered and that there are no remaining nits present in the child's hair will be required before the child is allowed back into school.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

It is the policy of First Lutheran School, Benton to comply with the state's child abuse and neglect reporting laws and with the mandatory reporting section of those laws. Any school official or employee who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes abuse or neglect as defined by law, shall immediately become responsible for making a report to the Department of Human Services. Legal Reference: AR Code 12-12-507.

DRESS CODE

Christians should present themselves in ways that bring honor to Christ (1 Timothy 2:9-10). Appropriate clothing creates a wholesome atmosphere and encourages responsible behavior. The Dress Code of First Lutheran School, Benton emphasizes modesty, neatness, and cleanliness.

For both boys and girls:

- Hair needs to be kept out of the eyes (short around face for boys; girls may wear hair clips).
- Facial piercings and tattoos are not permitted.
- Students must dress in conformance with one's biological sex.
- Clothes and shoes must be free of rips or tears.

Boys:

- Hair should not exceed collar length and be kept short around the face.

Girls:

- Make-up should be kept minimal and not be a distraction.

Jesus declared in John 14:19, “Because I live, you will live also.” Because we rejoice in our promise of eternal life, emblems such as skulls or any other depiction of doom, death, or Goth-like traits are prohibited. All final decisions are at the sole discretion of the administration of First Lutheran School, Benton.

Shirts:

- Solid colored polo type collared shirts – MUST BE TUCKED IN
- Must have one school logoed polo shirt, purchased from the approved vendor
- WHITE (only) turtleneck or crewneck shirts (long or short sleeved) may be worn under polo or other shirts

Sweaters and Sweatshirts:

- Worn over a dress-code approved polo shirt or spirit shirt
- Navy, gray or white solid color sweatshirts with no hoods, zippers, or logos
- Navy, gray or white solid color sweaters button up or pull over with no hoods, zippers, or logos

Jackets and Coats:

- Jackets and coats may be worn to school but left in locker or on coat hook in classroom with no rips or tears.

Pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, split skirts, pleated skirts, jumpers:

- Navy or khaki twill dress-style clothing items worn at waist level
- No denim, knit, spandex, corduroy, slits, cargo style, etc.
- Polo shirts or white Peter Pan collar shirts must be worn under jumpers
- Shorts and skirts must not be more than 4” above the top of the knee
- For girls only, when wearing a dress or skirt shorts or leggings must be worn underneath
- For students 3rd grade and above, dress belts must be worn when clothing items have belt loops (please do not remove belt loops).

Socks and Shoes:

- For boys and girls, socks must be worn with all footwear and be visible
- For girls only, leggings and tights must be solid navy, gray or white (no stripes or other patterns) worn only under skirts, skorts or jumpers
- Athletic shoes only – closed toe and heel with sturdy sole protection (no foot gloves, Toms, Crocs, Flip Flops or Sandals etc.) This is for your child's protection!

Other Days:

As the year progresses, we will look at other fun and non-uniform days. More information will be announced about these days as they are planned.

PROHIBITED ITEMS**Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

Cell phones (and other devices that allow for Internet or Bluetooth communication such as smart watches), if brought to school, must be turned into the office at the start of the day. They may be retrieved at the time of dismissal. When parents and children have a need to make contact, it is to be done through the office. Parents, please do not attempt to text your child during school hours. Simply call the office if contact with your child is needed.

At no time, whether on or off campus, are First Lutheran School, Benton students allowed to use cell phone technology in an adversarial manner against other First Lutheran School, Benton students. This would include such things as texting words intended to hurt another, taking photos or videos of another without the other's permission, or using photos or videos taken of another student so as to cause harm to another student. Any such actions, or any cyber-bullying of one First Lutheran School, Benton student by another, regardless of time and location, will incur consequences at school. Such behavior has a significant effect on the school climate and jeopardizes the secure and wholesome learning environment we seek to create.

Electronic devices besides cell phones and smart watches are prohibited unless approved by a member of the school staff. Check with school staff before bringing any electronic devices to school.

Other Prohibited Items

It would be cumbersome to list all the possible items a student might bring to

school that would be prohibited, such as weapons, potential weapons, illicit drugs and alcohol, items that would likely cause distractions to learning, etc. Suffice it to say, students should come to school only with items that are necessary to having a successful day of learning at school. This would include items such as lunch and snacks, school supplies, and anything that the student's teacher specifies. If there is a question, please contact the school or have the child leave the questionable item at home.

BEHAVIOR

Bullying

Bullying is defined as unwarranted aggressive behavior toward another which takes place in a repeated manner over time. It may be manifested physically, verbally, in writing, and/or in other ways which are intended to harass, intimidate, or control another person against his or her will. At First Lutheran School, Benton, there is no tolerance for bullying, and serious consequences will be meted out to students who are found to have engaged in any type of bullying. Acts of bullying will result in consequences that could include expulsion.

Other Prohibited Behavior

It would be cumbersome to list all the possible behaviors a student might exhibit that would be prohibited. Obvious prohibited behaviors would include the following:

- dishonesty
- disorderly conduct
- disrespect
- insubordination
- fighting
- damaging property
- vulgar language
- undermining learning

Many other prohibited behaviors could be imagined. Suffice it to say, it is expected that students will live by the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." We want to train children to abide by the teachings of Jesus which include loving one's neighbor as one loves himself or herself. Keeping this principle in mind will "cover a multitude of sins."

DISCIPLINE

Consistent discipline is essential for an orderly and productive educational environment, and it is the shared responsibility of parents, teachers, and students. It is essential that students abide by all school and individual classroom rules. We do not wish to exasperate our students, so we do not employ rules which serve no beneficial purpose. At the same time, we expect students and parents to demonstrate respect for the rules we do employ since they are designed to benefit the students and the school community as a whole. Students or parents and guardians who do not feel a given rule or procedure is fair, or that a particular disciplinary procedure was handled inappropriately are asked to speak in a respectful manner and at a reasonable time to the relevant teacher or staff about their concerns. The discipline program at First Lutheran School, Benton is designed to help students build character, develop social skills, properly handle emotions, and learn to act in loving ways toward other people. We see discipline situations as an educational opportunity, and our motive is always that of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration.

First Lutheran School, Benton teachers establish rules and procedures for their own classrooms and may employ reasonable consequences and rewards to support their classroom policies so that a quality learning environment is maintained. In addition, there are school-wide rules and procedures along with consequences and awards.

Both classroom and school policies will be provided to students and parents. Forms of discipline will typically be assigned from, but are not limited to, the following:

- verbal warnings
- natural consequences
- loss of privilege
- physical task
- academic task
- parental contact
- detention (lunch, before school, or after school)
- behavior plan
- suspension (in-school or out-of-school)
- expulsion

First Lutheran School, Benton does not employ corporal punishment.

Out Of School Suspension

The administration is authorized to suspend students from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of up to ten (10) school days, including the day upon which the suspension is initially imposed. The administrator or designee shall inform the student of the alleged charges or accusations and the basis of the charges or accusations. If the student denies the charges, the principal shall explain the evidence which forms a basis of the charges and shall permit the student to present his or her side of the story. If the administrator or designee still considers that a suspension is proper, he or she shall send the student home for up to ten (10) days. If the principal or designee feels it necessary, he or she may request a principal-parent conference. Students who are suspended are not allowed to attend or participate in any First Lutheran School, Benton activity during their suspension. Students suspended from school for disciplinary reasons may be allowed to make up schoolwork at a time and place designated by the principal. Failure to do so at the specified time will result in loss of credit for the work.

Expulsion

In the event that a student's behavior/actions warrant an expulsion, the following procedure will be followed:

1. After the administrator has met with the student and held a due process conference, he or she will make a referral to the school board recommending that the student be expelled. The parent or guardian will be informed about the referral to the school board.
2. The principal's decision to expel the student may be appealed to the school board if the parent or guardian wishes. If requested by the parent or guardian, the school board will meet with the student, parent or guardian, and principal within a reasonable time period to discuss the recommendation for expulsion. The decision of the principal or school board (if appealed to) will be final.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

At First Lutheran School, Benton, we are all about relationships. We take seriously the two greatest commandments as Jesus stated them: we are to love God, and we are to love each other (Matthew 22:36-40). All that God asks of us comes down to this: our need to love and to be loved. This is not surprising since the Bible teaches us that God, himself, is love (1 John 4:8). Love only

happens in relationships. But we also recognize that all authentic relationships encounter conflict. As human beings we all come at life from different angles with different points of view. This often results in conflict. We do not consider conflict, in and of itself, to be a bad thing.

Conflict can be handled well, or it can be handled poorly. At First Lutheran School, Benton, we want to handle conflict well by handling it biblically. This involves employing the following principles:

1. Refrain from gossip and hearsay (James 4:11; Ephesians 4:29). Do not assume everything you are told is an accurate representation of the truth, and do not repeat to others things that you do not know for certain are accurate.
2. Remember there are two or more sides to every story. If your child, for example, tells you about something that happened at school, and it sounds upsetting, do not assume that your child has presented everything accurately. This does not mean your child is lying; it simply means that he or she is telling the story from his or her own perspective. Check with the relevant person(s) at the school before you assume the worst.
3. Assume the best about people's motives. We all have experienced being misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is no fun to have your reputation diminished or tarnished among other people due to miscommunication, misinformation, or wrong assumptions.
4. Be willing to authentically listen to the other person. We cannot understand why another person is the way he or she is if we refuse to hear the other person's concerns.
5. Be willing to confess, to repent, to forgive, and to love. These are the ethics of Jesus, and we are disciples of Jesus. We want to set the proper examples for our kids in how to resolve conflict.
6. Before going to someone else about a conflict you have with a teacher or other school staff member or other parents or student, first go to the person with whom you have the conflict (Matthew 18:15). If your effort to resolve the conflict does not prove satisfactory, you may bring the issue to the school administrator. If you have an unresolvable conflict with the administrator, you may seek out a school board

member and/or the pastor. The school board as a whole will not address any conflict in which the previous steps have not been followed in a good-faith effort to find resolution. The school board will not entertain complaints about specific school personnel at regularly scheduled, monthly school board meetings.

Remember that we are all on the same side. We are all lovers of Jesus Christ, saved by his grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). We all want what is best for our kids. By adhering to these principles of conflict resolution, God will bless our community and do great things in the lives of our children.

SIGNATURE PAGE – Please sign and return to school

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the First Lutheran School, Benton Handbook. I understand it is both students' and parents'/guardians' responsibility to abide by it.

Student's Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____