

FIRST LUTHERAN
SCHOOL - BENTON
School Handbook
2026-2027

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Administration

Pastor James Burns

Maggie Chaloner

Acting Principal

Administrative Asst.

Teaching Staff

Frances Bacic

Anne Barnard

Sollie Jones

Frances/Sollie

Open

1st-2nd-3rd Grade

Kindergarten

4th-5thGrade

Aftercare

Aid For 1st-2nd-3rd Grade

School Board

Whitney Adkins

James Burns

Pam Evans

Michael Hill

Louise Lieblong

Rich Meyers

Cherri Williams

Member

Principal (non-voting)

Secretary

Treasurer

Vice Chair

Chair

Member

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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 six First Lutheran Church members, plus the pastor. 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 February 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. Partial 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 February 28th, 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 (\$250 at registration, \$250 at Open House,
Yearly Tuition	\$7208

LEARNS (EFA)

Most students will have their tuition paid through Educational Funding Accounts (EFA) as provided by the Arkansas LEARNS Act. For families who do not use this state funding, payment options are available. Families may also inquire about the ACE Scholarship, which may help offset registration fees.

Applications for the LEARNS/EFA program are only available during specific application windows established by the State of Arkansas. Families are responsible for applying during the open application period in order to receive funding. If a family does not apply during the designated application window, the student will not have access to LEARNS funding for that school year.

Parents/guardians are responsible for completing the application process and maintaining eligibility for the program. Families who do not receive or secure LEARNS funding will be responsible for the full tuition and applicable fees.

First Lutheran School does not control the LEARNNS application process or funding decisions made by the State of Arkansas.

LEARNNS/EFA funding is not automatic. Families must apply through the State of Arkansas during the official application period. If the application deadline is missed or eligibility requirements are not met, the family will be responsible for the full tuition and fees for that school year.

In the event that state funding is delayed, reduced, denied, or revoked for any reason, the parent or guardian remains responsible for payment of all tuition and applicable fees owed to the school.

Payment Options Without LEARNNS

Quarterly Payments

Tuition may be paid using cash or check on a quarterly basis. Payments are due on or before the first day of each academic quarter (Aug. 13, Oct. 13, Jan. 5, and Mar. 11).

Annual Payment Discount

Families who pay the full annual tuition by August 13 will receive a 5% discount for the year.

Late Payment Policy

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. We understand that there are times absences are unavoidable. In such cases we require the following procedures:

1. Parents/guardians are to call, email, or text the school’s administrative assistant or teacher 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 \$4.00 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 \$8.00. The account of a child picked up at 4:35 pm will be charged \$12.00. (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 may enter the school building in order to provide their signature.

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 the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, First Lutheran School – Benton will generally follow the closing decisions of the Benton School District. However, First Lutheran School reserves the right to make its own determination regarding delays, early dismissals, or closures based on local conditions and the safety of our students and staff.

If First Lutheran School’s schedule differs from Benton Public Schools, parents will be notified as soon as possible.

School closure announcements will be communicated through the following channels:

- Email message notifications to parents
- The Remind App
- The school’s Facebook page

Parents are encouraged to monitor these sources for the most current and accurate information.

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 for ensuring their children bring a healthy and adequate lunch to school each day. We highly recommend that a nutritious snack and lunch (as well as a wholesome breakfast) be provided for students, as children’s eating habits have a significant effect on their ability to concentrate and learn.

If students bring food that requires heating, microwave use must be limited to less than one minute so that other students may also use the microwaves in a timely manner.

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), 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 while also meeting the accreditation standards of the **Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (ANSAA)** and **National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA)**. Educational

standards and curriculum are reviewed regularly, and changes are made periodically as part of our commitment to continuous school improvement.

Christian Integration

First Lutheran School – Benton educates its students so that the beliefs and values of God’s Word, the Bible, are integrated throughout the learning process. Children attending our school receive daily religious instruction as part of the curriculum. Two chapel services are also held each week. Chapel services are conducted under the supervision of the school 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 to parents. Parents should sign and return these reports to indicate that they have reviewed their child’s report card.

Fourth quarter report cards are distributed on the last day of school once it has been determined that the family’s accounts are paid and up to date.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Frequent communication between parents and teachers has a significant impact on student success. We provide several ways for parents to stay informed about their child’s academic progress and school activities. We encourage parents to take advantage of these opportunities and to address any academic concerns as early as possible.

Conferences

Parents/guardians will be scheduled for a parent-teacher conference with their child’s teacher during the first and third quarters. Parents may also request additional conferences with their child’s teacher at any time as needed. We encourage all parents to attend these important meetings.

Gradelink

First Lutheran School – Benton uses the **Gradelink Student Information System**. Parents may log in at any time to view their child’s attendance and academic progress.

If you have not received your username and password for your Gradelink

account, please contact the school office. Parents are encouraged to review their child's progress on Gradelink on at least a weekly basis.

Website and Email

The website for First Lutheran School – Benton is www.flsbenton.com. The website contains recent news, parent resources, and teacher contact information. Parents may also find updates and announcements through the school's Facebook page.

Curriculum Quality

First Lutheran School – Benton seeks to provide a strong academic program that prepares students for success in future educational opportunities while grounding them in Christian faith and character.

Communication Expectation

Parents are encouraged to contact teachers with questions or concerns regarding their child's progress. Teachers will respond to parent communication within a reasonable timeframe during the school week.

Student Assessment and Testing

Each year, schools across the country administer standardized assessments to help evaluate student learning and academic growth in core subject areas. First Lutheran School – Benton uses several assessment tools to monitor student progress and help guide instruction.

One of the primary assessments used at First Lutheran School is the **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)** test. MAP is a nationally recognized, computer-adaptive assessment that measures student growth in subjects such as reading and mathematics. Students take MAP assessments in the fall, winter, and spring, allowing teachers and parents to see how students are progressing throughout the school year. The results of these assessments are shared with parents.

First Lutheran School also uses **DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)**, particularly in the early elementary grades. DIBELS assessments measure foundational reading skills such as phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, and comprehension. These brief assessments help teachers identify students who may need additional support in developing strong reading

skills and allow teachers to monitor progress throughout the year.

In order for these assessments to provide the most accurate measure of your child's ability, it is important that students get a good night's rest prior to testing days and eat a healthy breakfast the morning of the assessment.

While standardized assessments provide valuable information, First Lutheran School does not rely on a single test to evaluate student learning. Teachers conduct a variety of assessments throughout the year—including quizzes, classroom assignments, observations, and informal checks for understanding—to ensure that instruction is meeting the needs of each student.

Our philosophy of assessment emphasizes **individual growth and continuous improvement**. The purpose of assessment is not simply to compare students with others, but to help teachers and families understand how each child is progressing and how best to support continued learning and development.

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

Emergency Operations Plan

First Lutheran School – Benton maintains a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan designed to protect students, staff, and visitors during emergency situations. The plan addresses events such as fire, severe weather, medical emergencies, earthquakes, and security threats.

Faculty and staff are trained in CPR and emergency procedures, and students participate in regular safety drills throughout the school year. For security reasons, the school's full Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is not published in

the school handbook. Parents or guardians who have questions regarding the school's emergency preparedness procedures may contact the school administration for additional information.

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 each year.

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. These must be navy, gray, or black and may not be more than 4 inches above the top of the knee.
- For students in 3rd grade and above, belts must be worn with clothing that includes belt loops and must be properly fastened (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 black (no stripes or other patterns) worn only under skirts, shorts 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.

The school administration reserves the right to determine whether clothing or appearance is appropriate for the school environment. Final decisions regarding dress code compliance rest with the administration.

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. Students are expected to abide by all school and individual classroom rules. We do not wish to exasperate our students, so we avoid rules that serve no beneficial purpose. At the same time, we expect students and parents to respect the rules we do employ, as they are designed to benefit both the students and the school community as a whole.

Parents or guardians who believe a rule or procedure is unfair, or that a disciplinary situation was handled inappropriately, are encouraged to speak respectfully with the relevant teacher or staff member at an appropriate time to discuss their concerns.

The discipline program at First Lutheran School – Benton is designed to help students build character, develop social skills, properly manage emotions, and learn to act in loving ways toward others. We view discipline situations as educational opportunities, and our goal is always 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 those policies so that a quality learning environment is maintained. In addition, the school has school-wide rules and procedures with corresponding

consequences and rewards. Teachers are entrusted with maintaining an orderly classroom environment. Students are expected to follow the reasonable directions and instructions of their teachers and school staff at all times.

Both classroom and school policies will be provided to students and parents. Forms of discipline may include, 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 administrator is authorized to suspend a student from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of up to ten (10) school days, including the day on which the suspension is imposed.

The administrator or designee shall inform the student of the alleged charges and the basis of those charges. If the student denies the accusations, the administrator shall explain the evidence supporting the charges and allow the student an opportunity to present his or her side of the situation.

If the administrator or designee determines that suspension is appropriate, the student may be suspended for up to ten (10) school days. The administrator may request a conference with the parent or guardian if deemed necessary.

Students who are suspended may not attend or participate in any First Lutheran School – Benton activities during the period of suspension.

Students suspended from school for disciplinary reasons may be allowed to make up schoolwork at a time and place designated by the administrator. Failure to

complete the work at the specified time may result in loss of credit.

Expulsion

If a student's behavior warrants expulsion, the following procedure will be followed:

1. After meeting with the student and conducting a due process conference, the administrator may recommend expulsion to the school board. The parent or guardian will be informed of the referral.
2. The administrator's recommendation may be appealed to the school board by the parent or guardian. If requested, the school board will meet with the student, parent or guardian, and administrator within a reasonable period of time to discuss the recommendation. The decision of the school board will be final.

Administration Authority

The administration of First Lutheran School – Benton reserves the right to make decisions and take disciplinary action in situations that are not specifically addressed in this handbook. Such decisions will be made in the best interests of the students and the school community and in accordance with the mission and values of the school.

Decisions made by the administration regarding student discipline and school operations are considered final unless the handbook specifically provides a process for appeal.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

At First Lutheran School – Benton, we value relationships. We take seriously the two greatest commandments as Jesus stated them: we are to love God and love one another (Matthew 22:36–40). All that God asks of us ultimately comes down to this—our need to love and to be loved. This is not surprising since the Bible teaches that God Himself is love (1 John 4:8). Love happens in relationships, and we recognize that authentic relationships sometimes experience conflict. As human beings, we approach life from different perspectives and points of view, and this can result in disagreement. Conflict, in and of itself, is not necessarily a bad thing.

Conflict can be handled well, or it can be handled poorly. At First Lutheran

School – Benton, we seek to handle conflict well by addressing it in a biblical manner. This involves following the principles below:

1. **Refrain from gossip and hearsay** (James 4:11; Ephesians 4:29). Do not assume everything you hear is an accurate representation of the truth, and do not repeat to others things you do not know to be true.
2. **Address concerns directly rather than publicly.**
Concerns about school matters should be addressed privately and directly with the appropriate person at the school rather than discussed through social media, group messaging, or informal conversations with other parents. Public discussion of concerns often spreads incomplete information and can damage relationships. Our goal is always restoration, understanding, and resolution.
3. **Remember that there are often multiple perspectives.** If your child tells you about something that happened at school and it sounds upsetting, do not assume you have the entire picture. This does not mean your child is being dishonest; it simply means he or she is sharing the situation from his or her own perspective. Please check with the appropriate school personnel before drawing conclusions.
4. **Assume the best about people's motives.** We have all experienced being misunderstood or misinterpreted. It is discouraging when reputations are harmed due to miscommunication, misinformation, or incorrect assumptions.
5. **Listen carefully and respectfully.** We cannot truly understand another person's perspective if we refuse to listen to his or her concerns.
6. **Be willing to confess, repent, forgive, and show love.** These are the ethics of Jesus, and as His disciples we seek to model these attitudes for our children as we work through conflict.
7. **Follow the biblical process for addressing concerns** (Matthew 18:15). If you have a concern with a teacher, staff member, parent, or student, please first speak directly with the person involved. If the issue is not resolved, you may then bring the matter to the school administrator. If a concern remains unresolved with the administrator, you may contact a school board member and/or the pastor. The school board will not address conflicts unless these steps have first been followed in good faith.

Remember that we are all on the same side. We are followers of Jesus Christ, saved by His grace (Ephesians 2:8–9), and we all desire what is best for our children. By following these principles of conflict resolution, we pray that God will bless our school community and continue to work through us for the good of our students.

HANDBOOK CHANGES

First Lutheran School – Benton reserves the right to revise, amend, or update the policies contained in this handbook when necessary. Families will be notified of significant policy changes.

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 and we agree to abide by the policies contained within it, including any updates communicated by the school.

Student's Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____