Charger Tot Parent Handbook 2026-2027

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

700 Dewhurst Road
San Antonio, Texas 78213
(210) 342-6803
Fax (210) 308-7177 www.stgregorysa.org

Director's Welcome Note:

Welcome to the Charger Tot Family! We are honored to partner with you in providing a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment where each child can learn and grow. Our goal is to always keep your child's best interests at heart while supporting their development in all areas, including social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, and creative development.

We value the partnership between families and our staff and look forward to creating a positive experience where every child feels loved, respected, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Our program is monitored through the Texas Health and Human Services Licensing Department. We will have regular visits at our facility to ensure that we are complying with all state laws and that we are providing your child the best care possible.

The door to our program is always open should you have any comments, concerns or questions. Thank you for choosing to enroll your child in our Charger Tot program. We are excited to have you as part of our family.

Sincerely,
Marisol Zavala
Charger Tot Director

Enrollment Procedures and Policy Changes

Families must complete all required enrollment forms and provide current emergency, health, and authorization information before a child may begin the program. Enrollment is based on available space and completion of required documentation.

Parents will be informed of any changes to program policies through written notices, email, parent communication apps, or other official program communication methods. Families will receive updates in advance whenever possible and may contact the Program Director with any questions or concerns.

Admission Requirements

AGE REQUIREMENTS: Children must be at least 18 months of age to enroll in our program. Per our licensing agreement, a child cannot exceed the age of 36 months in our program. Once a child turns 36 months and is fully potty trained, the parent may enroll them in our St. Gregory the Great Catholic School PreK-3 program.

APPLICATIONS: Families can request an application in the front office of the school or can access it online at www.stgregorysa.org. Once the application is reviewed and accepted, the family will be notified of their admittance into the program.

TUITION AND FEES:

There is a registration fee of $200 that is due **each year** your child is enrolled in the program. This fee is non-refundable.

Our weekly fee will be $195 for a full-time student. Part time will consist of no more than 3 full days and will have the rate of $130 a week. Tuition must be made prior to the upcoming week or first thing Monday morning.

If your child's tuition payment becomes more than two weeks late, your child may not be able to attend until the account becomes current. Please direct all concerns and questions to the Director.

Upon enrollment, the family will register for full or part time status. If at any time the family needs to change their status, they must report it to the Director in writing. The Director will review the request and will notify the family of the decision. Families will not be able to modify the status weekly. If a child is registered as a full-time student and is absent for two days for personal reasons or illness, parents are required to pay a full-time rate.

*If your child will be absent from the program for a specified number of days/weeks due to travel or unforeseen circumstances, the family must notify the director and a decision will be made on a case by case basis. There will be a $50 fee assessed each week that the child will be absent in order to save a spot in the program.

Tuition During Holidays

Tuition is based on your child's enrollment and reserves their space in our program. Therefore, tuition continues to be due during scheduled center closures, including holidays, staff development days, and other announced closures. These closures are already built into our annual operating schedule and do not reduce weekly or monthly tuition. This policy allows us to maintain staffing, facility costs, and the high-quality care we provide throughout the year.

Late Pick-Up Policy: Children must be picked up by **6:00 p.m.** A **$25.00 late fee** will be assessed for any pick-up after 6:00 p.m. If a child remains at the center **15 minutes after closing (6:15 p.m.)**, an additional **$5.00 per minute** will be charged until the child is picked up.

Hours of Operation

- **Hours of operation:** Monday through Friday, **6:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**
- **Days of operation: Monday through Friday**
- **Months of operation: Year-round**, operating from **August through July**.

  Note: A Tot Holiday Schedule will be posted in the child classroom.

  One will be provided to each parent at the time of enrollment or upon request.

Release of Children

Children will be released only to a parent, legal guardian, or an individual authorized by the parent or guardian whose name is listed on the child's enrollment records. Any authorized individual picking up a child must present a valid government-issued photo identification upon request. Children will not be released to anyone who is not listed on the child's authorized pickup form unless prior written authorization has been provided by the parent or legal guardian. These procedures are in place to ensure the safety and security of every child.

Parent Communication Policy

The Charger Tots Program values open and respectful communication with families. We believe that working together supports each child's growth, development, and well-being.

Parents will receive regular updates about their child's daily activities, meals, naps, diapering or toileting, and overall progress. Staff will promptly communicate any illness, injury, behavioral concerns, or other important information.

Parents are encouraged to share updates about their child's health, routines, or any changes that may affect their care. Brief conversations are welcome during drop-off and pickup. For more detailed discussions, parents may schedule a conference with the teacher or Program Director.

All information regarding children and families will be kept confidential and shared only with the child's parent, legal guardian, authorized individuals, or as required by law.

Safe Sleep Policy

The Charger Tots Program follows safe sleep practices to help ensure the health and safety of all children. Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep on a firm, flat sleep surface with no loose bedding, pillows, toys, or other items in the sleep area. Staff will monitor children regularly during nap times and follow all applicable childcare licensing guidelines. Parents are encouraged to share any sleep-related information or concerns with staff. Naptime schedule between 12:00-2:30pm

Meal and Food Service Practices

Charger Tots provides a nutritious breakfast and afternoon snack each day. Parents are responsible for providing a healthy lunch and late snack for their child. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Parents will need to notify the Center director of any food allergy or dietary accommodation requirements.

Parent Participation

Charger Tots welcomes parent participation and encourages families to be involved in their child's learning. Parents are invited to attend special events, classroom celebrations, conferences, and school activities. Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly with teachers and the Center Director and may volunteer in accordance with the school's visitor and volunteer policies.

Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity

Our program promotes daily physical activity to support each child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Children are provided opportunities for both indoor and outdoor active play every day through age-appropriate games, free play, music and movement, playground activities, and teacher-led exercises.

Children participate in outdoor play daily, weather permitting, and indoor physical activities are provided when outdoor play is not possible. Parents should dress their child in comfortable clothing and closed-toe shoes appropriate for active play and the weather. We recommend sending jackets, hats, sunscreen (with authorization), and other seasonal items as needed.

During extreme heat, cold, rain, or other unsafe weather conditions, outdoor play time may be shortened or moved indoors. Teachers will provide safe indoor gross motor activities to ensure children continue to receive daily physical activity.

Discipline and Guidance

Our teaching staff is required to implement positive discipline and guidance methods when addressing unacceptable behaviors. Our teaching staff works to set up a structured learning environment that will minimize the occurrence of negative behaviors. Through a proactive approach, our teaching staff works to eliminate and redirect such behaviors. Teaching staff implement the following discipline and guidance methods to address unacceptable behaviors.

Our staff will use positive discipline and guidance methods that help children develop internal control of their actions and encourage acceptable behavior.

1. All children enrolled are involved in discipline and guidance methods that are consistent, based on the child's level of understanding and development, and promote children's self-control through acceptable behaviors.

2. All employees will use positive discipline and guidance methods which encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction. Children in classrooms will:
    a. Have good behavior recognized, encouraged, and praised.

b. Be taught by example through use of fair and consistent rules.
c. Be reminded of behavior expectations daily through clear, positive statements and receive guidance appropriate for their level of understanding.
d. Be redirected by teaching staff stating alternatives when behavior is unacceptable. (Example: Blocks are for building, not throwing; try throwing the ball.)
e. Be taught to understand why certain conduct is unacceptable and what acceptable behaviors are.
f. Not use any form of corporal punishment as corporal punishment is unacceptable within the program. This includes, but is not limited to hitting; pinching; humiliating; yelling; using harsh, abusive or profane language; or punishment associated with food, rest time, or toileting.

3. In the event that a child is exhibiting out-of-control behavior that is compromising the safety of themselves, others or destructive to school property, physical redirection will be utilized.

Suspension and Expulsion

The Charger Tots Program is committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all children. Suspension or expulsion will be used only as a last resort after reasonable efforts have been made to address concerns with the family. The program reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a child if their continued enrollment poses a safety risk or if program policies are repeatedly not followed.

Parents Rights

In accordance with **26 Texas Administrative Code § 746.521**, parents have the right to:

- Enter and visit the center during operating hours.
- Review records concerning their child and the center's inspection and compliance history.
- Receive a copy of the center's policies and procedures.
- File a complaint with Texas Child Care Regulation without fear of retaliation.
- Receive Child Care Regulation contact information.
- Have the center comply with valid court orders regarding child custody and access.
- Request to review staff training records and, when applicable, view video recordings of alleged incidents involving their child as permitted by law.

Our program is committed to respecting these rights and maintaining open communication with all families.

Parent Questions and Concerns

Parents are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns regarding the center's policies, procedures, or their child's care with the Center Director. We are committed to open communication and will address concerns promptly and respectfully. You may reach Director at marisol.zavala@stgregorys.net or by phone

Dress Code

Our goal is to have the children have fun and be safe at school. We ask that you send your child in clothes that they are comfortable in. Shoes that cover your child's foot, such as tennis shoes, are the best way to protect their toes and feet. Shoes that do not have a back are prohibited. Children are also required to have at least two complete outfits in their backpacks at all times in case of an accident.

*Staff is not responsible for the loss of any jewelry or accessories.

Breastfeeding Area

A designated breastfeeding area is available in the Charger Tots Indoor Playground. This area provides a comfortable space for mothers to breastfeed or express breast milk while visiting the center. We support and welcome breastfeeding in accordance with Texas law, and mothers may also breastfeed anywhere they are otherwise authorized to be at the child care center.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Upon enrollment of your child in the program, it will be necessary to take your child to receive a physical examination and provide a copy of the form to the center. You will have one week to turn in this paperwork once your child is accepted for admission. Your child's physicals will need to be provided for every check up that they attend based on their age when they are enrolled in our program.

IMMUNIZATIONS

In accordance with the Texas Department of State Health Services and Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards, all required immunizations **MUST** be completed by your child's first day of attendance, or the child must be on a schedule for completion of these immunizations by his or her physician. If your child is not up to date, program staff will work with you to ensure your child is up-to-date on all required throughout the school year. You may check with your child's doctor or the Health Department to determine if your child is up to date on his or her required immunizations. Parents are granted 30 days to acquire missing vaccines for their child or have a physician place your child on a catch-up schedule. If after 30 days the child is not up to date and/or not on a catch-up schedule, the child must be excluded from attendance until requirements are met.

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Policy

Our center is committed to protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases. We encourage all children to receive immunizations according to the recommendations of the Texas Department of State Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Immunization records or a valid exemption must be on file for each enrolled child as required by state licensing. Children who are not appropriately immunized may be excluded from attendance during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, as directed by public health authorities.

Illness and Exclusion

Programming has established illness and exclusion criteria in accordance with the guidelines from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers (refer to Communicable Disease Chart).

CHILD ILLNESS

If a child becomes ill while in our care, the following steps will be taken:

- The parent will be contacted to pick up the child.
- The child will be separated from other children and supervised by a staff member including being moved to the school's main office with the school nurse.
- Appropriate attention and supervision will be given to your child until the parent/guardian or authorized adult picks up the child.

- An incident/illness report will be completed by staff. The Director/Designee will review the form and sign it. Parents will be provided a copy of the form after they have reviewed and signed it as well.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

A child will not be admitted into the classroom if one or more of the following exists:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in preschool activities, including outdoor play.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than teachers can provide and may compromise the health, safety, and supervision of other children in our care.
- Unless medical evaluation by a health care professional indicates that a child can be included in the preschool activities, we will not be able to include children in activities if they have a high fever, accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness and other signs that the child may be severely ill. (Please refer to the Communicable Disease Chart/Appendix.)
- A health care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
- In the case of fever (100.4), the child will not be allowed back into the classroom until 24 hours have passed fever-free and without the use of fever reducing medication. This guideline helps to reduce the spread of illness to other children and staff.
- A child can be sent home if they are experiencing fever, diarrhea, or vomiting while at the center. If a child continues to experience these symptoms, a doctor's note may be requested from the parent.

PHYSICIAN'S RELEASE

If the child has had a medical problem that occurred at home or school that requires him/her to return to the classroom with limitations or specialized equipment, the parent/guardian must bring a release form from the child's physician that indicates any special limitation/treatment needed at the center. We will discuss these conditions with the parent to determine if these accommodations can be met.

MEDICATION

Under no circumstances will over-the-counter medication (aspirin, cream/lotion, cough syrup, etc.) be given to children by the staff unless prescribed by a doctor. If a child requires any type of medication, the center staff will not administer it unless the following conditions are met:

1. Parent/guardian must complete and sign the Authorization for Dispensing Medication form (DFPS#7238).
2. Medication must be prescribed by the physician.
3. Medication must be in the original container.
4. The original container must be labeled with the child's name, current date, physician's name, and the directions for administering the medication.
5. Parents are asked to please provide the dropper or measured spoon with which to administer the medication.
6. If your child has a recurring medical problem that requires long-term or as needed medication, the medication label must include information on symptoms to watch for as per your Doctor's recommendations. Symptoms will be treated for up to a six month period, which at that time all information must be updated on the form.

Unassigned Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

At this time, **Charger Tots Child Care Center does not maintain unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors on-site**. If a child has a prescribed epinephrine auto-injector for a diagnosed allergy, the parent or guardian must provide the medication along with a completed medication authorization form. The medication will be stored and administered according to the physician's instructions and Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards.

Diaper Ointment and Insect Repellent Authorization

Parents or legal guardians must complete and sign a written authorization form before staff may apply diaper ointment or insect repellent to their child. The child's teacher will provide the required consent form. Only products supplied by the parent and labeled with the child's name will be applied according to the manufacturer's instructions. A consent form will be available upon parents request.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

All suspected and/or known cases of child abuse or neglect, to include sexual abuse, must be reported to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) as soon as

one becomes aware. Suspected and/or known child abuse or neglect reported to staff, regardless if it occurs in our care or not, the agency has the obligation to report immediately to DFPS.

All staff go through a training each year provided by the agency which goes into detail about warning signs of child abuse, prevention, and the steps to take if action is needed to contact DFPS. Any new employee entering the agency receives the training prior to beginning their position at new employee orientation.

Any staff accused of an inappropriate interaction with a child will be reported to DFPS. If an inappropriate interaction is validated, staff will take the necessary corrective action. Any action taken against a staff member must remain confidential and will not be shared with a parent.

All persons (staff and parents) have the obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child and must report it immediately to the toll-free Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400), which is available 24 hours a day. Reports may also be filed online via the Hotline website www.dfps.state.tx.us.

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT

Any time a child has an accident at a site, the child will be provided with First Aid or CPR as deemed necessary, and every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian at the time of the accident. Accidents will be recorded on the appropriate reporting form. A copy of the report is provided to the parent/guardian. The report form is completed on all accidents, no matter the severity.

In the event emergency medical care is needed, 9-1-1 will be contacted immediately. Every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian at the time of the accident. In the event emergency medical care is needed, staff will accompany the child to an outside medical facility. The parent will be asked to meet the staff person and child at the hospital. Staff will use information on the Admission Information form (DFPS form 2935) to contact parents. If an injury to a child requires treatment by a health care professional, staff will notify Child Care Licensing [746.305] within 48 hours after the injury occurs.

PARENT REVIEW OF MINIMUM STANDARDS AND LICENSING INSPECTION REPORT

If a parent/guardian has concerns or believes DFPS Minimum Standards are not being met, he/she should tell the Center Director and call the local licensing office at (210) 337-3399, located at 3635 SE Military Dr., San Antonio, TX 78223.

A copy of the DFPS Minimum Standards is available at each center and parents/guardians are welcome to review them at any time. If you wish to obtain a copy of the Minimum Standards, refer to www.dfps.state.tx.us.

A copy of the last DFPS Minimum Standards Licensing Inspection Report is posted on each Center's Administrative Board and available for review.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Local Family and Protective Services (FPS) Office

3635 S.E. Military Dr.

San Antonio, Texas 78223

(210) 337-3399

LICENSING AND INSPECTIONS OR STATE AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Charger Tot program is regulated by State requirements. We are required to maintain compliance with regulations issued by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Child Care Licensing. Throughout the program year, Child Care Licensing conducts periodic, unannounced inspections of our center. DFPS Licensing reports are available for review and posted for the parents to access at all times.

Staff Education Requirements

All employees must meet the qualifications required by state licensing. Staff must complete required orientation before caring for children independently and maintain current Pediatric First Aid and CPR certification, when required.

All staff are required to complete the annual training hours required by state licensing, including training in child development, health and safety, child abuse and neglect prevention, emergency preparedness, positive guidance, and supervision.

The center is committed to ongoing professional development to ensure quality care and education for all children.

Safety Drills and Plans

Fire drills occur once a month and tornado/inclement weather drills occur 4 times yearly.

The relocation Plan's

On- campus location for reunification is St. Gregory's gymnasium.

Off - campus Location is Mary’s house Community center 720 Beryl Dr.

Staging areas: 1) Parent Check-in Area, 2) Family waiting area , 3) Student Supervision Area, 4) Retrieval of students of parents from designated staff.

Gang-Free Zone Notice

Under the Texas Penal Code, the area within **1,000 feet** of this child care center is designated as a **gang-free zone**. Certain criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity committed within this zone are subject to increased penalties as provided by Texas law. This notice is provided in accordance with Texas Child Care Licensing requirements.