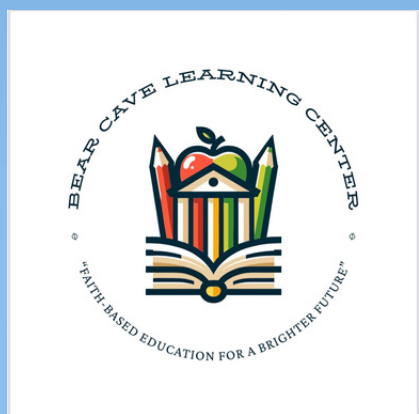




**BEAR CAVE LEARNING CENTER**

# *Parent Handbook*



*Phone: 210-862-2781*

*10688 US-87 La Vernia, Tx 78121*



# Policies and Procedures Handbook



## Introduction and Welcome

### **Welcome!**

Thank you for choosing Bear cave learning center, where we strive to provide an environment that is both stimulating and nurturing. We promote learning through discovery, exploration and self-expression in a safe setting with experienced teachers and caregivers who understand the importance of developing the whole child. Our center is well-equipped for children 6 weeks through children 12 years of age.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide the highest quality care and education through a child-centered approach where each child can develop his or her fullest potential. We strive to help each child develop his or her social emotional, cognitive, communication and motor skills to the best of their ability. Our center emphasizes positive relationships and building each child's self-esteem, self-confidence, and positive relationships with peers and adults. We believe that all children are capable of greatness and can reach their fullest potential given a supportive, loving, risk-taking environment where creativity and curiosity are encouraged. We believe that children should be encouraged to ask questions, problem solve, and explore areas of interest. It is our ultimate mission to ensure that all children develop a love of learning.

### **License and Training**

Bear cave learning center is licensed in the state of Texas to provide care for children ages 6 weeks thru 12 years old. All of our teachers have completed First Aid, CPR, Water Safety Training and all minimum training requirements necessary.

### **Non-discrimination Policy**

Bear cave learning center prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information, and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission of, or in employment and application for employment.



# Curriculum and Special Activities

## **Curriculum**

We believe that young children best learn by guided exploration through play with some direct instruction. Therefore, our daily schedule reflects a balance of exploratory learning, small group work, and whole group learning opportunities. We use the ABC Jesus Loves Me curriculum. This research-based curriculum encourages play based learning with a focus on social, emotional, and physical development. A sample daily schedule for each age level has been provided at the end of this handbook.

## **Enrichment Activities**

Bear cave learning center believes in providing children with enriching and engaging experiences. We occasionally schedule special presentations by people in our community to provide additional educational opportunities to the children. Fire fighters, police officers, and military servicemen and women have been invited to speak at Bear cave learning center. Parents will be notified in writing in advance of these visits and can opt out of having their child participate if desired. An alternate activity will be provided on these occasions.

## **Indoor/Outdoor Physical Activities**

At Bear Cave learning center we believe that learning happens best through active play and exploration both indoors and outdoors! We will have many outdoor activities in our playground area they are designed to help children build coordination, strength, and confidence. From obstacle courses, ball games, swinging, or just climbing on our playground--your child will love being active in the fresh air while learning important social and motor skills. Indoors, in the class rooms children will enjoy a wide range of hands on learning experiences. Activities might include sensory bins, music and movement, creative arts and story time.

In extreme weather conditions that may pose a significant health risk or limits outdoor play we will use the gym at our church if available or stay in classrooms to enjoy special activities inside (dance party, musical chairs, paper basketball, etc..) If it is 98 degrees or above children will stay inside, and for cold weather we will not all children outside if its below 45 degrees. We recommend sending your child in closed toed shoes and comfortable clothing for indoor and outdoor activities. In cold weather children should be sent in proper clothing including jackets, pants, etc.. We will apply sunscreen/bug spray upon parents request with a medicine log sheet filled out and parents must fill out a permission slip form.

## **Birthdays**

Cupcakes or cookies can be sent in for your child's birthday with advanced notice of at least one week. All treats must be store bought and may not be homemade due to the health policies of the state of Texas for daycares. Please do not send in a whole cake as this is difficult to serve. You may also send in one juice box per child. Parents will be notified in advance of upcoming birthday parties and will be required to provide an alternate snack for children with food allergies. If you do not want your child to participate in birthday parties, please indicate this in writing upon registration. Your child will be provided with an alternate activity.



# Enrollment and Withdrawal

## **Enrollment Requirements**

Before your child can be officially enrolled in Bear cave learning center you must complete and provide the following documents:

- Parent Contract
- Enrollment Form
- Copy of Immunization Record or Signed Waiver
- Signed Consent Forms (those that are applicable)
- Registration Fee must be paid \$100
- Deposit of \$75 into child's supply account (see below for description of this account)

## **Policy Changes**

If we need to update our policies at any time we will notify parents thru our bright wheel app and send new copy's to our parents.

## **Infants**

### **Safe sleep for infants 12 months or younger 746.501**

Parents enrolling infants 12 months or younger will receive/review/sign a safe sleep policy. This policy is based on recommendations from the American academy of pediatrics and the consumer product safety commissions for infants to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.

## **Waitlist**

Once Bear cave learning center has reached capacity, your child will be placed on our waitlist. This requires a \$75 non-refundable deposit to secure your child's spot. When a spot becomes available, you will be contacted and will have 48 hours to respond or you will lose your spot and the next parent on the waitlist will be contacted.

## **Suspension and expulsion**

Occasionally, a child will exhibit behaviors while being in our care. If the difficulty persists, we will schedule a conference with you to develop an individual plan for the success of your child. However, if the child's behavior continues to be disruptive or unsafe despite this intervention, we reserve the right to withdraw your child from our care. If the rules and policies set forth are not followed, we reserve the right to terminate the daycare contract agreement at anytime. We will give the child three chances before terminating care. In such an event, we will be paid in full through the end of the week in which such termination occurs.

You must give a two week notice when voluntarily withdrawing your child from Bear cave learning center. You will be responsible for all final payments through the end of the notice period, whether in attendance or not.

## **Registration Fee**

A non-refundable registration fee in the amount of \$100 is due upon signing the child care contract.



## Rates and Fees

### **Rates**

Full-Time weekly fees: Full-time is defined as having access to our services on all days that we are open, Monday thru Friday from 6:30am-5:30am.

Rates are as follows:

**Infants(6 weeks-12 months):** \$250

**Toddlers(12 months-24 months):** \$220

**2 year old:** \$220

**3-5 year old:** \$180

**Friday care(school age):** \$35

### **Part-time**

Part time weekly rates: Part-time is defined as having access to our services 2-4 days a week. \*\*Days attending must be finalized before start date\*\*

- Please call for part-time pricing

### **Summer Camp**

June-July:

Infants: \$250

Toddlers: \$220

2 year old: \$220

3-12 year old: \$180

### **Payment Due Date**

Payments are due every Friday before care for the next week. Payment may be made by cash, check, or credit card. We will take payments thru the Bright-wheel app as well.

### **Late Fees**

A late fee of \$10 per day will be assessed for each late day. If payment is more than one week late, we reserve the right to terminate this agreement.

### **Early drop off/Late pick up Fees**

Parent/Guardian will be charged additional fees for early drop off/late pick up.

\$1 per minute increment

\$5 per 5 minute increments

\$30 per 30 minute increments



### **Student Vacations:**

If a Parent/Guardian plans on taking a vacation and the child will not be in care, the provider must be given 2 weeks notice. Parent is expected to pay during their scheduled vacations

## **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

### **Arrival**

For full time students, arrival occurs between 6:30am-9:00am but we will make reasonable accommodations if you need to drop off your child at a different time. During arrival please park in the designated parking spaces and ring the bell to enter the building. Doors are locked at all times. Once you enter, please sign the daily sign-in sheet with your child's name, your name and the time. One of our staff members will escort your child to their classroom or you may walk your child. If your child will be absent, please notify us by 8:30am if your child will not attend by calling our center.

**We will have a cut off time at 9:00am parents will not be allowed to drop off after this time unless we have a doctors note.**

### **Dismissal**

All children must be picked up by 5:30pm. Please ring the bell to enter the building. You will be required to sign out your child. If someone else will be picking up your child they must be on the Authorized Persons list. Photo ID will be required by the person picking up your child. Individuals other than parents who pick up the child will be asked for picture ID in order to ensure the safety of all children.

Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals. If someone shows up to pick up your child and staff was not made aware of it, we will call you immediately.

## **Hours of Operation and Closings**

### **Hours of Operation**

Our center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am-5:30pm.

### **Holiday closings**

Bear cave learning center will be closed on the following holidays: Christmas week, Thanksgiving day the day before and the day after, New Year's day, Good Friday, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Memorial Day. We will have teacher in-service days throughout the year and will inform parents of the closure days.

During holiday closures, the Provider will not provide care and Parent/Guardian will be billed.

**We will follow La Vernia Isd calendar**

### **Closures due to other reasons**

For closures due to other reasons (e.g. power outage, weather, acts of God, etc.), Parent/Guardian is expected to pay for care on these days



# Illness and Injury Policies

## **Child Absence Due to Illness**

If your child has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, Covid, cold, flu or other contagious illness, please keep your child at home until symptoms have subsided and they are without fever, diarrhea, and vomiting for a period of at least 24 hours. When a child is ill and will stay home, the Parent/Guardian is expected to make every effort to give the provider as much notice as possible. Parent/Guardian is expected to pay on child sick days. If a child does not arrive for the day and no notice has been given to the provider, parent/guardian is still expected to pay for that day of care.

## **Illness During Care**

When a child becomes ill while in the care of the provider, the provider will immediately notify the parent/guardian. If child presents with a fever above 100.4, vomiting, or diarrhea, the parent/guardian or approved pick up person, will be required to come pick up the child from care. Bear cave learning center may require a physician's note to return the child to care at our discretion.

If your child becomes ill while in daycare, you will be contacted immediately so that he/she can be picked up.

Symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 F or greater
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Positive Covid, Flu, Strep or other communicable disease test
- Unexplained rash or hives
- Persistent cough (not allergy related)
- Mucous -excessive and/or persistent from mouth, nose, eyes.
- Ear drainage or severe ear ache, suspected ear infection or ear infection
- Eye infection or suspected eye infection
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Oozing sores or cuts
- Headache moderate to severe
- Head lice, ringworm (until treated)
- Unexplained fatigue

## **Child injury**

In the event of injury, parent/guardian will be notified immediately and an incident report will be completed. First aid will be applied. If the injury is more substantial, the provider will require the parent or authorized person pick up the child from care. If it is a life threatening injury, emergency authorities will be contacted immediately.

## **Bug Bites**

If your child receives an insect bite during our care, we will administer first aid if you have signed the first aid consent form. If you have not signed the consent form, we will notify you immediately so that the child can be picked up if deemed necessary.

## **Allergies**

If your child has allergies, please complete that section on the enrollment form.

The parent is required to provide information during registration about the child's allergies. Life threatening allergies require physician's documentation and emergency medication to be supplied to the provider. Our staff is fully trained to administer emergency medication (e.g. Epi-pen) if necessary. In the event of a life threatening allergic reaction, the parent as well as emergency services will be contacted immediately.



# Emergencies

## **Emergency Evacuation**

Evacuation routes and relocation plans are posted in every room. In the event of an emergency at Bear cave learning center, children will immediately be evacuated if necessary outside to our evacuation site which is the north east side of the building. Emergency officials will be contacted. Parents will be contacted immediately via phone call. At the discretion of the provider, the parent may be required to pick up the child from care, caregivers will have childrens files with them so that parents can ve contacted. If the building must be evacuated during the emergency and cannot be occupied for the remainder of the day, the children will be taken to First Baptist Church of La Vernia 201 S Crews St La Vernia Tx 78121. where parents will be called to pick up their child.

## **Emergency Drills**

In compliance with state of Texas law, fire drills must be practiced at least once per month. Severe weather drills must be practiced four times a year and Lockdown drills must be practiced four times a year. Prior to drills, children will be instructed on the procedures and given an opportunity to practice. Children and staff will stay in their classrooms. Parents will be notified prior to all practice drills.

# Meals and Snacks

## **Meals & Snacks**

Parent is required to provide breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack(2:00pm/5:00pm). Parents are encouraged to provide healthy food for their child. Please do not send in candy with your child. Food sent will only be given to your child and will not be shared with others (with the exception of birthdays). We will not have a microwave to warm food and we encourage parents to send a lunch with an ice pack as we do not have a fridge. Water is available to children as needed throughout the day. However, please send a reusable water bottle with your child's name on it.

At all times during drinking and eating, children are required to be seated and not engaged in any play activity. This is to ensure safety, to avoid choking, and to promote healthy eating/drinking habits. Please advise us if your child requires a special diet.

# Medical

## **Vision and Hearing screening requirements**

Vision and hearing screening tests are required for children 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Parents are required to provide one of the following as documentation:

- The individual visual acuity and sweep check results
- A signed statement that the child's screening records are current and on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends away from the center.
- An affidavit stating that the vision or hearing screening conflicts with the tenets of practices of a church or religious denomination of which the affiant is an adherent or member.



## Medical

### **Staff Training**

All staff have received training in First Aid, CPR, and Water Safety Training , pre-service training and annual training as required by the state of Texas.

### **Medical Emergencies**

Should an emergency arise, we will attempt to contact the custodial parent/guardian. if parents are not available, we will contact the person on the emergency contact portion of the child's enrollment form. 911 will be called and/ or an ambulance will be called only in severe emergencies and the director will make that determination. CPR/First Aid may be administered if necessary.

### **Medication Administration**

Prescribed and non-prescribed medications can be administered with proper medication authorization form completed by the parent. Prescription medication for your child must be prescribed by a physician. All prescribed medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label that clearly states the medication name, child's name, administering amount and the date of the prescription.

Non-prescribed medication administration must be accompanied with a doctor's note which states that the staff at Bear cave learning center can administer the medication and follow the dosage amount as indicated on the box and/or container. All medications will be kept in a secure cabinet that children cannot access. Medication is accepted only if required by a doctor example would be an inhaler or epi pen.

### **Vaccination Requirements**

All children enrolled in Bear cave learning center must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the state of Texas Department of Health. This applies to children from birth through school age. The documentation must be validated by a physician or other health-care professional with a signature or rubber stamp, and include the child's name and birth date, the number of doses and vaccine type, and the month, day and year the child received each vaccination. This documentation may be a photocopy. Any exemptions from the immunization requirements must meet criteria specified by the state of Texas Department of Health.

### **Tuberculin testing requirements**

Tuberculin tests are not required by Bear cave learning center but we do recommend discussing any questions concerning the test with your child's doctor.

## Safety and Security

### **Security System**

Your child's safety and security is our highest priority. At Bear cave learning center we have an extensive security system in place. All external doors are locked at all times and parents must ring the outside bell before being permitted inside our facility. Security cameras are positioned outside of the building and in all classrooms to ensure the security and safety of all in our building.

## Texas Penal Code

Bear Cave learning center will verbally inform parents that under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.



## **Fire Safety**

Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are present throughout the building as required by Texas law. Our facility is regularly inspected by safety officials to ensure compliance with Texas law.

## **Carbon Monoxide**

Our center is equipped with carbon monoxide detectors in all rooms to ensure the safety of everyone at Bear cave learning center.

# **Discipline**

## **Positive Behavior Supports**

Bear cave learning center uses positive behavior supports to encourage pro-social behaviors with adults and peers. Children are rewarded with frequent praise for following rules and procedures. Children also may earn tangible rewards such as stickers, smiley faces, special activities, and treasure chest.

Children are taught to be respectful, responsible, and kind to others. Caregivers model these behaviors and role play situations that encourage kindness during social skills groups. Good manners are encouraged and modeled by our caregivers.

## **Calm Down Area**

If a child starts to become upset or dysregulated, he or she will be encouraged to use the calm down area to practice self-soothing activities such as breathing, cuddling an animal, playing with a sensory toy, etc. Once the child is calm, he or she will be reminded of the rules and encouraged to rejoin the group.

## **Harm towards others**

If a child harms a staff member or child, the child will be separated from the group until the child can calm down. Once the child regains control, he or she will be asked to apologize to the adult or peer. The parents of the children involved will be notified by the end of the day. An incident report will be completed.

## **Biting**

If a bite is sustained, the offending child is removed from the group. The harmed child will be administered first aid. Both parents will be contacted immediately an incident report will be written for the injured child. If the bite has broken the skin, it is recommended that the child be examined by a doctor. If biting becomes a pattern, the parents will be required to attend a conference with staff to develop a plan to address the biting behavior. If biting persists despite the implementation of additional supports, the child may be withdrawn from Bear cave learning center.



## Communication

All children will receive a daily note from the caregiver or teacher.

For toddlers, the note will contain amount of soiled diapers and time. The teacher may include additional information at her discretion. Please feel free to communicate with your child's teacher briefly upon arrival or dismissal. For more in depth conversations, please discuss with your child's teacher or we can set up a parent teacher conference if needed. We will also communicate with parents thru our bright wheel app. For infants they will get a note sent home daily with all diaper changes, feedings, and activities.

## Parent Involvement

All parents are welcome to visit their child at Bear cave learning center at any time. We welcome input from parents about the education or the care of their children. If you wish to volunteer at Bear cave learning center or go on fieldtrips, please contact any staff member so we can make necessary arrangements.

## Discussing Policies and Procedures

Parents are welcome to contact Bear cave learning center's director with any questions that they have regarding their children's care at our center or about center policies, procedures or in general about how the center operates. The director is normally available during daytime business hours and can also be reached through email at [bearcavelearningcenter@yahoo.com](mailto:bearcavelearningcenter@yahoo.com).

## Toilet Training

We will work with the family to implement a toilet training plan when the child demonstrates readiness skills. These skills include the following:

- The child is able to pull up and down pants and underwear with minimal assistance
- The child is able to communicate to you when they need to go to the bathroom
- The child's diaper is dry after nap times and for long periods during the day
- The child is cooperative when taken to the restroom

If your child is demonstrating these skills, then the provider and parent will create a written plan for toilet training. This plan will include the times when your child will be taken to the bathroom during the day. A visual toileting schedule will also be provided so that your child can learn the steps of the toileting process. You will be given a copy of the visual schedule to use at home for consistency and will also receive a daily log of your child's toileting progress.

During this time period, you will be required to provide three sets of extra clothes to be kept at Bear cave learning center. Soiled clothing will be placed in plastic bags and given to the parent daily. Please replace with clean clothing by the next day.



## Clothing

Children should come dressed in comfortable, season appropriate clothing that can get dirty, since some activities we do on a daily basis are messy. Spare changes of clothing are required for all children. Indoor shoes are required for all children. Feet are required to remain covered by public health guidelines at ALL times when indoors. Indoor shoes also protect your child's feet in the event of a fire drill in the winter months/rainy days. Please also remember whenever weather permits the children are taken outside for 2 hours per day. Please ensure that you have proper outerwear provided for your child so that they are comfortable and don't miss out on outdoor play. If a child does not have proper outdoor apparel they will have to remain indoors with another teacher/classroom.

## Water Activities

Parents will be notified in advance of any water activities. Splash/sprinkler play is offered during the summer months. Parents will be asked to send swimsuit/swim shorts, shirt, towel, and water shoes.

## Naps and Quiet Time

All children will be provided with a nap or quiet time daily for 2 hours. Children who do not nap after the first hour will be permitted to engage in quiet activities on their nap mats. Caregivers will work with parents of infants to develop their unique nap schedule based on age and needs.

## Toys, Media and Photo Video Policy

### **Toys**

We provide age appropriate toys for all children in our care. For this reason, please do not send toys with your child to Bear cave learning center. Toys tend to get lost, taken, or broken very easily.

### **Electronic Media**

We have tablets available to your child for the purpose of practicing educational content or games and for use during reward time. Children also have access to educational TV programs to supplement their learning. However, electronic media may only be used for for children up to 1 hour per day.

### **Photograph and Video Policy**

We love to take photographs of the children to share with families. You will be required to sign a photo and video release in order for us to photograph your child.

We have a Facebook group where we post photos. To be invited to this group please let us know during registration.



## Child Abuse Policy

We are mandated child abuse reporters by law. If abuse is suspected of a child in our care, we are required to report it to The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services as required by Texas law. Please be aware also that children will NOT be released under any circumstances to impaired individuals.

If we have reason to believe that any persons picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. The incident will also have to be reported to The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services as required by Texas law.

### **Recognizing the signs of child abuse**

#### **Physical Abuse:**

Physical abuse is a physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. Suspect physical abuse when you see:

- frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, or black eyes without adequate explanation
- lack of reaction to pain
- fear of going home or seeing parents

#### **Neglect:**

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused. Suspect neglect when you see:

- obvious malnourishment
- lack of personal cleanliness
- torn or dirty clothing
- child unattended for long periods of time

#### **Sexual Abuse:**

Sexual abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, etc. Suspect sexual abuse when you see:

- physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- difficulty sitting or walking
- extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex

#### **Emotional Abuse:**

Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. Suspect emotional abuse when you see:

- over compliance
- low self-esteem
- severe depression, anxiety, or aggression



## **Minimum standards and Licensing Inspection Report**

A copy of the minimum standards for child-care centers is available for review at Bear Cave learning center upon request. In addition, parents can find it online by going to: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/child-care-regulation/minimum-standards>.

## **Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline**

Parents may contact the Texas abuse and neglect hotline at 1-800-252-5400 available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide. Parents may also make a report thru their website at [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org) and get a response within 24 hours.

## **HHSC**

Parents may find any information needed from Texas health and human resources by calling our local office in San Antonio at 210-337-3399 or visiting their website at [hhs.texas.gov](http://hhs.texas.gov).

## **Parents Rights**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., custody order, restraining order, or protection from abuse order) Bear Cave learning center must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all the amendments thereto. In the absence of a court order on file with Bear Cave learning center, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. We cannot, without a court order limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. Our employees will contact the local police department should a conflict arise.

## **Supporting children with special care needs**

If required we will allow therapist/third party person to come in for any child that it is needed for. We will never turn a child away with special needs. We are not specialized for children with special needs but will accommodate as necessary recommended by a health care professional. Our staff will have activities that are specialized for children who have special needs in our facility they will utilize and provide adapted equipment when necessary.



## Supplies

### **Supply Account**

Parents will be provided with a supply list upon registration and are expected to provide all supplies on the list or pay \$75 for supplies. This supply account will ensure that your child will always have adequate supplies.

Please provide the following supplies and write your child's name on all items **(these items are separate from supply account)**.

### **Infants**

Diapers/wipes

extra clothes

formula and bottles (we do not wash bottles please send enough for the day)

pacifier

diaper ointment

### **Two Year old's**

Pullups

wipes

ointments

nap mat

blanket/fitted sheet

at least 3 changes of clothing and shoes

lunchbox with breakfast, lunch, and snacks (2:00pm/5:00pm)

### **Preschool (3,4,5)**

nap mat

blanket/fitted sheet

change of clothes (3 sets) and shoes

lunchbox with breakfast, lunch, and snacks (2:00pm/5:00pm)

