

Messiah Lutheran
Little Lambs Preschool
Parent Handbook
2019-20

“Children:
*A Gift from
the Shepherd,”*



“Children:
*A Gift
to shepherd.”*

Messiah Lutheran Church & Little Lambs Preschool
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WELCOME

We are grateful that you have chosen to entrust your child into our care for their early childhood experience. We will offer to you and your child all the help we can toward a successful and productive year. We look forward to providing your child with the best learning program and environment that encourages social, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and creative growth and development.

ADMINISTRATION

Messiah Lutheran Little Lamb's Preschool is an extension of the educational ministry of the church. It is operated under the guidance and direction of the preschool director and the congregation's Preschool Board which includes a board chairperson, one senior congregation member, one congregation member at large, one congregation member preschool parent and one non-member preschool parent.

Staffing the preschool are a director and three teachers. They participate in on-going staff development and education in order to remain alert and current in the field of early childhood education and providing a healthy and safe environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

We believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The Holy Spirit helping, we will proclaim Christ in our actions and programs that more may know His love through us.

PHILOSOPHY

Messiah Lutheran Little Lambs Preschool subscribes to Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Thus we view children and families a precious resource given by God and acknowledge our responsibility to assist parents in providing for their children's nurture and care.

We will provide a Christian early childhood setting in which three-, four-, and five-year-old children are helped to grow, learn and develop as God's children in an environment that encourages social, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and creative growth and development in a developmentally appropriate setting.

We see the preschool as a significant opportunity to meet the needs of Christian early childhood education of the children of the congregation and the community.

We are committed to the following objectives:

1. To provide a setting where children will develop a good, positive self-image firmly rooted in God's love.
2. To help the children experience and learn about God's love through Jesus Christ.

3. To provide a setting where children are exposed to a variety of experiences so they will learn more about themselves, their friends, and the world around them.
4. To foster creativity, exploration, self-discipline, and a love of learning.
5. To foster the growth and development of the “whole child” in developmentally appropriate—spiritual, physical, emotional, social, cognitive (intellectual), and creative ways by:
 - a. providing appropriate materials and activities to develop physical development of large and small muscle coordination.
 - b. Developing self-esteem, confidence, and independence.
 - c. Creating an accepting atmosphere so the reality of a loving God who created each one as a unique individual can be experienced.
 - d. Helping them learn to get along with others and problem-solve.
 - e. Providing concrete, hands-on experiences for the children to question, explore, and problems-solve in order to develop their thinking abilities.
 - f. Providing opportunities and media for self-expression.

OUR STAFF

Mrs. Brenda Durand is the preschool director and assists with classroom needs in both preschool programs. Mrs. Durand is the Pre-K Math, Fine Motor & Social Play teacher. Mrs. Durand is married and a mother of two grown children. She has an Associate’s Degree and three State Certificates in Early Childhood Education and Administration. She also has STARS credit hours in health, safety, & nutrition, administration. Her experience working with children of various ages for over 20 years includes preschool, Sunday School, volunteering in elementary classrooms and physical/occupational therapy groups. Brenda is a member of our congregation and has been on staff since 2000.

Mrs. Lavonne Bansberg is one of the co-teachers for the 3-4-year-old program and is the academics, Christian education, and music teacher for the 4-5-year-old Pre-K program. Mrs. “B” is married and a mother of two children. She has been a Sunday School teacher, junior youth group leader and VBS director. She enjoys playing the piano and singing. Lavonne has her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education and is a certificated substitute teacher for the Marysville School District. She is also a substitute paraprofessional and is health room qualified. Lavonne has been on staff with us since 2003.

Mrs. Susan Lang is one of the co-teachers for the 3-4-year-old program and is the art teacher for the 4-5-year-old Pre-K program. Her experience working with children of various ages for over 20 years includes preschool, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and teaching crafts in her children’s elementary school. Susan has been a congregation member at Messiah for more than 30 years, and has been on staff since 1996.

Additionally, all preschool staff have background checks on file, have current CPR and First Aid certification, multiple staff have Washington State Food Worker Cards, and all staff attend Northwest District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod sponsored Early Childhood Leadership Seminars for continuing education.

PROGRAMS OFFERED

Messiah Lutheran Little Lambs Preschool offers two preschool programs for children ages 3 to 6. Please refer to your child's daily schedule for outlined times and activities.

3-4's Preschool: This class is for children who have reached the age of 3 by August 31 of the enrolling school year (child must be potty trained).

Program Days, Time & Ratios:

Tuesdays & Thursdays
9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Student/Teacher Ratio:8:1

4-5's Pre-K Program: This class is for children who have reached the age of 4 by August 31 of the enrolling school year (child must be potty trained).

Program Days, Time & Ratios:

Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays
9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Student/Teacher Ratio: 9:1

ADMISSION POLICY

Messiah Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or other school-administered programs.

ENROLLMENT

Classes are filled based on space availability and meeting the age requirements for that program. Waiting lists are established once a class is filled. Parents will be notified when an opening is available. Your child's enrollment is complete and secure when the application form, immunization record, emergency card, and registration fee has been recorded in the school office (registration fee is not refundable). It is required that your child be completely toilet trained and birth dates meet the current cut-off dates for the enrolling school year.

- 3-4's Preschool: Must be three or older by August 31 of the enrolling school year.
- 4-5's Pre-K Program: Must be four or older by August 31 of the enrolling school year.

Registration Fees: Registration fees cover basic materials and equipment for the enrolling year. Of necessity, it is NON-REFUNDABLE. If a student fails to attend or is withdrawn from school, the registration fee is forfeited.

Registration Fee: \$65

Tuition Fees: Tuition fees are established to cover our costs for the school year and are paid in nine equal monthly installments September through May. Parents are encouraged to be prompt and **submit the payment by the first school day of September and by the first of each month** October through May.

A late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed for payments received after the 10th of each month, and a reminder will be sent on the 10th of the month. An additional late charge of \$.50 per day will be added after the 15th of the month to any unpaid tuition. Any fees resulting from a NSF check will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Accounts that are two months in arrears shall be passed on to the Preschool Board. The Preschool Board shall contact the parties in arrears the second month in order to establish an agreeable payment schedule or possible discontinuation of services until account has been brought up-to-date. Parties in arrears from a prior school year may not enter students for current year until their account is paid in full or an agreeable payment schedule has been approved by the Preschool Board.

- 3-4's Program/Tuesdays & Thursdays: \$125.00 monthly
- 4-5's Pre-K Program/ Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays: \$145.00 monthly

Tuition is figured as an annual fee. Because it is an annual fee, no refunds are given for illness, vacations, or snow days. Since the preschool operation is based on capacity enrollment, **two-week's written notice should be given if it is necessary to withdraw a child.** Advance notice will increase the possibility of filling the vacancy.

A 15% discount on tuition will be given to the second child from families with more than one child enrolled in the current school year. This will apply to the equal or lesser tuition.

PRESCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The preschool setting is the total environment as experienced by the child. It includes the physical setting, the teacher, the equipment, the curriculum, and the time structure.

All of these communicate a feeling to the child. It is one of welcome, acceptance, safety, and security to which children, given time, will respond positively.

The physical surrounds of the preschool are designed to help young children feel comfortable. Shelves, tables, and chairs are low to the ground. Books and toys are attractively displayed and sturdy. Activities set out are designed for children to explore by touching as well as seeing. Every experience from removing and hanging up coats to snack time is designed to enable the child to become independent and responsible; and that helps each child feel very good about him or herself.

There will be art, creative play, small and large muscle activities, music, language experiences, social learning, Christian education, Chapel time, and snack time; all planned to maximize the child's developing abilities. Children need to exercise their curiosity, express their creativity, try new experiences, and repeat successful ones in order to grow. The preschool setting facilitates this.

Another important part of the child's preschool environment is the schedule—how the day is arranged. It is important to young children to be able to predict events. The security of the same schedule each day—of knowing when to have story and snack and music—will comfort your child and help them to feel in control. That's an important aspect in learning, because when a child is secure they can then experiment with new ideas or activities. Please see specific schedule according to program enrollment.

Occasionally a child will not be ready to join a story or activity. They can find another quiet activity that does not disturb the other children. A child who is reluctant to participate in a group activity will eventually decide to join when they notice how much fun it is. Most children experience a mixture of happy and fearful feelings as they think about "going to school" for the first time. It is highly recommended that you visit the preschool prior to attending and please plan to attend the parent and child orientation scheduled prior to the beginning of the school year.

Suggestions for a Successful School Morning

- Have a regular/early bedtime.
- Let child choose clothes the night before and lay out for next morning.
- Allow sufficient time for breakfast, cleanup, and dressing.
- Arrive at school feeling relaxed and secure.

Suggestions to Ease Parent/Child Separation Anxiety: It is such an exciting time when your child takes that first step towards independence and goes to school. Most of the time it is a smooth transition that your child will be excited about, but sometimes a child screams and cries for you not to go. This information will help you if your child has separation anxiety (or mom & dad too).

Children need to learn to develop a secure, trusting relationship with another adult. This is difficult for some children. Some children cry at times of separation or may do fine from the start, but weeks later, children who are seemingly secure, suddenly decide not to want to go to preschool anymore. Some children will be so upset at first that they throw up. Some children will hit you in anger at separation and then again when you pick them up. This is normal. It sure can make a parent feel lousy, though. All the emotional turmoil that you and your child are feeling is normal and a good indication that you feel a strong connection and bonding with each other.

When a child cries during the first few days of separating at a new school, there are some things you can do to make it easier. Have a predictable good-bye routine. Stay five minutes, give them a hug and kiss and say good-bye to them. Direct them to the same activity each time you arrive for a while. If they enjoy puzzles, go to the tables with puzzles and maybe do or start one with them then go. Say good-bye in the same place every day. This predictability will soon become a soothing routine for them. You may also remind them that you will be returning to pick them up from their fun time at school.

The longer you linger the more prolonged the anxiety will be for you and your child. Your child will ask for another kiss and hug, this will confuse the good-bye routine. Tell your child one hug, one kiss and then good-bye. If your child is throwing a tantrum, hand them over to the teacher and leave. The teachers will be able to calm them down and then it will all be over. This may happen for a few days, but if you are consistent and follow the routine, then eventually the tantrums will stop. You will both be “winners” with the child’s success. You are always welcome to call and check on your child during the school day.

While we make every effort to ease the situation for children, it is wise to relieve the child of the responsibility of making the decision about going to school. It is better NOT to give the child the choice or decision about going to school. This is the parent’s decision and should not be offered or suggested to the child.

Your child will eventually learn the sequence of their day; they go to school, get loves and hugs from you when you leave. At school they will have fun and play and learn to trust themselves and the teachers. Then, they will get picked up by you for more loves and hugs. Children are proud of themselves when they can master their own feelings and enjoy school.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Our goal is to help you prepare your child for kindergarten and, on a larger scale, for life in the world. Since all children grow at different levels, we try our best to work with them at individual levels.

We introduce new skills and ideas. We help them in the process of socialization, like sharing and taking turns. They learn numbers and letters. There are fun things happening as they learn about shapes and colors, weather and time, safety and cleanliness, etc. Play is one of the best ways for kids to learn about the world around them. During a child's first five years, play is the dominant activity through which children learn. Children engage in manipulative (hands on) play and actually do things such as building blocks, puzzles and stringing beads, etc. A child engages in physical play to develop the use of large motor muscles. Through social play, young children learn how to get along with friends and family. Imaginative or creative play is the delightful way a child expresses his or her feelings and thoughts about all they have discovered in their world.

We use the **Voyages** preschool curriculum published by Concordia Publish House. This Christian curriculum leads little ones to Jesus with engaging and interactive materials. Basic Christian concepts are explained through simple language and bright illustrations. Take-home materials encourage families to journey into God's Word together as well. This program includes great visuals, a friendly puppet friend named "Jelly", plush bible figures, and a flannel-graph program to help in the telling of bible stories as well.

We also have a big book science program and hands-on activities for children to explore science, health, and cooking.

Remember that our school is Christ-centered, and we strive to be consistent in that as we help the children understand that emphasis in all phases of learning. We provide a daily warm and loving atmosphere.

Pastor Kurt Onken has chapel-time on a regular basis with the children. The children learn that Jesus is their best friend, and Jesus' love is for them and for everyone in this world. The Christian curriculum and chapel-time is age-appropriate for preschoolers and shares the love of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. This in no way takes away from your child's regular Christian worship and Sunday school experience.

SCHOOL YEAR

Messiah Lutheran Little Lambs Preschool follows the Marysville School District's school calendar with our standard school year running September through the end of May. Traditionally the only variance is for the Northwest Lutheran Teachers' Conference our preschool staff attends during October (usually two non-school days are required).

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed in PLAY CLOTHES and according to the weather. The clothing should be free of complicated fasteners so the child can be independent when going to the bathroom and no hoods with strings to prevent strangling hazards. Children should always be dressed appropriately for the weather. We go outside to play in all types of weather. Please dress your child accordingly. Your child's name should be placed on all outdoor clothing and other belongings so the owner can be found. Shoes should be comfortable and have a nice rubber sole and closed toe (tennis-type shoes are best) suited for playing, running and climbing safely. Please, no flip-flops or high platform shoes. Dress shoes are appropriate for school picture day and special program days, otherwise tennis shoes are the best and safest footwear for preschool.

ITEMS FROM HOME

We ask that the children leave their toys at home. Remember toys get broken or sometimes lost and the children get upset. Children also give toys away without permission from parents, and they argue over the toys and ownership.

If your child has a book, CD, or tape that would be of interest to the whole class and would enrich our curriculum, we would appreciate this being shared occasionally. We suggest you first discuss the item with the teachers before bringing it. No guns, laser lights, war toys, or other violent toys are allowed. If they are brought to school, they will be taken away and put aside until dismissal.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents are responsible for the children's transportation to and from school. We suggest carpools in the interest of good stewardship of resources.

FIELD TRIPS

Our preschool program has limited field trips schedule, but has expanded special interest activities included in the preschool day to enhance preschooler's curiosity and exposure to the world around them. This includes monthly themes and guest visitors to the preschool facility. If we leave the building, seat belt and child safety seat use are required. We will notify you at least a week prior to the scheduled field trip. All drivers must complete a Transportation Form prior to transporting students to and from field trips and have a current Washington State Patrol background check on file in the school office. All preschoolers must have a completed field trip permission slip.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Arrival:

●**Sign in:** Parents should sign in on daily attendance sheet on clipboard located in the entryway and wait with preschooler until doors are opened at 9:30 a.m.

Arriving promptly at 9:30 a.m. is essential to allow each student the opportunity to participate in all learning activities:

We open outer church doors at 9:15 a.m. and parents remain with students until preschool doors open at 9:30 a.m. Parents may enter with preschoolers, but we encourage students to be independent by:

- Hanging up their own coat
- Find nametag & hang on board
- Use restrooms & wash hands
- Start their morning work or choose an activity

Once the students are within the preschool doors, parents are free to leave.

Dismissal:

●**Sign out.** When doors are opened, parents will form two lines in the coat area and wait for their child to be dismissed (child will only be released to parents or designated person on emergency card or Dismissal Request slip).

- Students will only be released to parents or designated person on emergency card or Dismissal Request Slip (I.D. will be requested from unfamiliar individuals).
- Please arrive promptly for dismissal.

Please inform the staff if your child is to be picked up by someone else other than the regular person(s) designated on your child's emergency card, or if there is a need to be later or earlier than usual. (A "Dismissal Request Slip" or written note is required giving times, date, and names for a different pickup/release person or you will be called and the child will not be released until a parent/guardian has been contacted.) Individuals that we do not know, even if they are on the emergency card "release to" list will be required to show photo identification.

If you know you are going to be a few minutes late because of a one-time emergency, please notify the preschool so we can reassure your child. If you are 15 minutes late a second time, you will receive a warning about an impending late arrival fee. If you are late a third time, you will be assessed a fee of \$15 for that and each late arrival thereafter which will be added to the next month's tuition.

Parking

Preschool families are welcome to park on the north or south side of the building. Any open parking spaces are available to you for drop-off and pick-up (including Disabled

Parking spaces). It is appreciated however, if the two closest disabled parking spots on both sides could be reserved for disabled parking permits and/or daycare vans. This policy may be adjusted as the need arises.

SECURITY POLICY

The outside doors to our facilities may be locked 15 minutes after school begins and will be opened 15 minutes before school ends. This is only a security measure and not meant to hinder parent's access to their child. A door buzzer is in place and a staff member will answer if you need to come to the school at other times. There may be times when other activities are going on at the church during preschool hours, and the doors are not locked.

SNACK TIME & BIRTHDAYS

Before snack each preschooler is encouraged to try and go to the bathroom, and they all must wash their hands. Students and staff sing a snack time prayer and use good manners during snack. Children are encouraged to share conversations at their assigned snack table and are responsible for cleaning their area when finished.

All preschool families provide snack on a rotating basis. The snack person is indicated on the monthly preschool calendar. At our Orientation day or at time of enrollment you will receive a snack suggestion list. Each student will have an opportunity to share a birthday snack or half-birthday snack—a **healthy snack with a birthday napkin is great! Water will be served daily as the drink with snack.**

We encourage the children to at least taste the snack of the day even if they decide not to finish it. **NOTE: It is important that you inform the staff about any food allergies or intolerances. Depending on the severity of the child's allergies, you may be asked to provide his or her snack each day.** All food allergies and intolerances are posted in the kitchen, and all staff are informed of the allergies or intolerances.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Guidelines for Determining Wellness of Child: The following are some guidelines for all to follow to avoid the spread of illness. A current Washington State Record of Immunization must be on file in the school office and up to date. A current emergency card with health history must be on file with any known allergies or reactions. Teaching staff will do daily health observation and assessment, being careful to notice any changes or concerns. Parents/guardians will be notified of any questions or concerns the director or teaching staff might have regarding their child's health.

When is a child too ill to be at preschool?

- Persistent cough or sneezing not associated with allergies or asthma.
- Temperature 100° or higher and who also have one or more of the following:
 - Earache
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Rash, or
 - Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
- Vomiting – two (2) or more occasions within 24 hours.
- Diarrhea – three (3) or more watery stools or one (1) bloody stool within 24 hours.
- Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered with cloths or bandages.
- For suspected communicable skin infections such as impetigo, pinkeye, and scabies – the child may return 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.
- Antibiotics: Students must be on medication 24 hours prior to attending school. (Prescriptions: ear infections, strep throat, sinus infections, etc.)
- Head lice – until treatment is effective: No Nits.

If the child becomes ill at school, he/she shall be isolated from other children and be properly attended to until parents can be notified to pickup the child. If medical treatment is indicated and the parent or emergency contact person cannot be reached, their physician will be contacted, or if the situation is extreme, 911 shall be called.

We ask that you report any communicable or infectious diseases or illness to the preschool director or staff. If infectious diseases or parasites such as chicken pox, strep throat, or head lice, etc. are reported, we will notify all preschool families. Informational notices will be sent home via student mail to provide informational guidance to parents as well as posted on preschool bulletin board. (Student confidentiality is observed.)

Reportable Disease List

The following is a partial list of reportable diseases in Washington State. For a complete list, please visit: Washington’s Department of Health <http://www.doh.wa.gov/notify/forms>. By law, it is required that doctors, hospitals, laboratories, schools, and child cares notify their local health departments when they become aware of one of the diseases on this list.

Reportable Diseases Preventable by Vaccination

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆Diphtheria ◆Haemophilus influenza type B (HIB) ◆Pertussis (whooping cough) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆Hepatitis A or B ◆Measles (rubeola) ◆Mumps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆Meningococcal disease ◆Poliomyelitis (polio) ◆Tetanus ◆Rubella (German measles)
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Immunization Requirements

For a child to attend preschool, his or her parent or guardian must present a signed **Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS)** as proof of the child's immunization status. According to Washington State WAC 246-105, any child attending preschool must either be:

- Fully immunized at the ages and intervals consistent with the national immunization guidelines,
- In the process of becoming immunized **OR**
- Exempt from one or more of the immunizations required for a child to attend.

For a child to be excused (exempt) from a required vaccine, parents must provide preschool with a signed **Certificate of Exemption (COE)**.

Students with signed **Certificate of Exemption** for immunizations may be excluded from preschool in the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. The child would be excluded until the local public health officer decides it is safe to return.

(Reportable Disease and Immunization information is provided by our local Snohomish Health District www.snohd.org).

Minor Bumps, Bruises and Injuries: Please let the teaching staff or director know of any injuries that might be of concern or require special care. We in turn will report even minor bumps, bruises or injuries to you or caregiver at release time or sooner if more severe. You may receive a written note with brief description of incident and care as well.

Washington State Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect: Today, reporting laws embrace all professionals working with children. Individuals typically designated as mandatory reporters include school personnel and child care providers as well as a number of other professionals. For more information, contact Washington State DSHS Child Protective Services.

Medication Policy: Prescription and non-prescription medication will not be administered at preschool unless they are a life-saving means (example: epi-pens for severe allergies). These types of medications will only be administered with prior written consent of the parent or guardian and proper instruction of staff for administration, use, and storage.

Fire & Earthquake Drills: Drills are conducted monthly and are recorded in the school office. Prior to first safety drills, the preschoolers are introduced to the plan so they know what to expect and why we are practicing for such emergencies. Children will have an opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts. The staff have been instructed in what to do in a lockdown situation. We use the Play Safe! Be Safe! children's fire safety education program provided by the Marysville Fire District.

Preschool Emergency Kit & Personal Ziploc Kits: Messiah's Preschool has a rolling bin filled with emergency supplies which includes first aid kit, blankets, food, and water. These supplies are available for all students and staff in the event of an emergency. Parents are welcome to supply their own personal Ziploc Emergency Kits for their preschooler if they choose. Please see information sheet with suggested supplies (personal kits are optional and will be returned at the end of the school year).

CPR & First Aid: All preschool staff have current CPR and first aid training.

Food Worker Cards: Multiple supervisory staff have current State of Washington Food Worker Cards.

Washington State Patrol Background Checks: All preschool staff have Washington State Patrol background checks on file in the school office. Any classroom volunteers or field trip drivers will be asked to complete a background check request.

OBSERVATIONS & PROGRESS REPORTS

We have chosen to keep parents informed of their child's progress by the means of an observation form that has been developed to give each parent an idea about the strengths of their preschooler at a particular point. We have chosen to follow this route because children vary in their development, and we count on the support of parents to help each child grow. Team up with your child's teacher and share some of your child's strengths, weaknesses, and favorite activities. We also encourage you to share any changes in your home environment that might influence your child and require special awareness.

ORIENTATION, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONFERENCES

Orientation: The first meeting of the year will bring all parents and students together to orient them with our school. Information about teaching staff, schedules, activities, snacks, birthdays, policies and procedures and the like will then be shared.

Christmas Program: Sometime during the season before school is dismissed for the Christmas break, the children of our school will be involved in a Christmas program in the church during a public worship time. It is highly encouraged that your child be a part of this program. Their witness of their faith and the birth of the Baby Jesus is a very special experience. Traditionally offerings collected during this service are donated to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Western Washington.

Closing Program: On the last school day of the school year, we have a closing program with songs and presentation of certificate of attendance with a cookie reception. This is an opportunity to bring everyone together once again including grandparents and other special guests if they are available.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parents will have the opportunity to schedule a conference with the staff. This sharing time allows staff to get to know you and your child better and provides valuable information to serve your child's needs. Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time. Please contact teaching staff or director if you wish to schedule a conference at any point.

GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is derived from the word "disciplina" which means "to instruct". Children learn by watching and modeling adult behavior. How to handle feelings, relationships with people, and ways to spend time are learned from models. Children reflect what they see and hear.

Modeling for children is very important:

- Children are expected to sit while they eat – so must we.
- Children are expected to cooperate, share, and take turns – so must we.
- Focus on direction or redirections rather than correction. **PROACTIVE, RATHER THAN REACTIVE.**

We do not use corporal punishment or social degradation within our program.

Limits are simple and direct:

- We do not hurt ourselves or others.
- We do not destroy equipment or materials.
- We do not disturb other people.

In helping children to understand our limits we use:

- Reminders
- Positive reinforcement
- Redirection
- Problem solving
- Giving the child choices that the child, parent and staff can accept.

Based on the above guidelines, we have established the following policy regarding unacceptable behavior:

Aggressive behavior, i.e, hitting, biting, bad language, disruptiveness in class; anything that is threatening to others. When any of these actions occur we will then:

1. Help child problem solve.
2. Notify parents.
3. Prepare a behavior plan with parent input.
4. Have regular parent/staff conferences to monitor and share progress.
5. Re-evaluation of child's enrollment and/or referral for outside professional help may be recommended if undesired behavior continues.

In caring for the safety and wellbeing of all students, the teaching staff may need to remove a physically aggressive student who may harm themselves, others, or equipment; this applies to a student who is disrupting the educational process as well. This may be by allowing the student to move to a cool-down chair (giving the child a way out) or the preschool director may be asked to provide assistance in helping the situation.

In guiding young children, our goal is to help the child feel good about him or herself, to help children develop self-discipline, and to consider the needs and desires of other people. In order to do this, the following guidelines will be used:

1. Prepare the environment so there are enough choices of activities and enough materials available for all the children. Providing a program which has routine activities roughly taking place at the same time each session.
2. State the rules as clearly as possible and in a positive way. If the child acts inappropriately, the child will be reminded of rules.
3. The first action will be to redirect a child to an appropriate activity or behavior. If necessary, and as a last resort, a child will be removed from the situation. The child will not be threatened, hit or shamed because of misbehavior.
4. When the child is removed from the situation, he or she may be given clay to pound, paper to crunch, time to run outside, balls to throw and encouraged to verbalize their feelings.
5. Although separation from the group will be used only as a last resort, it may happen at times.
6. If the concern continues, teachers will keep a journal and describe each episode: time, place, those present, what happened, what was done. An incident report may be shared with the parent.
7. If the concerns continue or increase, recommendations for outside professional help may be recommended.

Children in the preschool should feel they are loved and accepted for themselves and not for what they do or do not do. This is the foundation of Christ's love for us. Discipline involves more than guiding behavior. It includes comforting, caring for, and nurturing young children.

SCHOOL PICTURES

During the month of October we schedule a photographer to take school pictures and make them available to the parents. Several picture packages are offered, however, purchasing pictures is completely optional. Pictures usually arrive before Thanksgiving.

BOOK CLUBS

From past experience we have noted that many parents seek to provide their children with good reading materials. We offer Scholastic book clubs for various age levels at a reasonable cost and occasionally Usborne Books & More. There is never an obligation to purchase, but when books are purchased the school earns “bonus” points or free materials, which helps us upgrade our teaching aids.

COMMUNICATION & NEWSLETTERS

This parent handbook has been supplied in an effort to answer many of your questions and for future reference of policies and procedures. Parents are informed of the activities of the church and the preschool by the additional means:

Church Newsletter (Messiah’s Messenger): When your child attends our preschool, you will have an opportunity to sign up to receive Messiah’s newsletter either via e-mail or paper copy or you may choose to opt out. This brings into your home our monthly newsletter, “Messiah’s Messenger”, and calendar along with other congregational information. It is one of the means we use to keep you informed. It also helps you to know what happens in the other portions of our ministry if you would like to participate in any or all of these happenings. There is also a special section in this newsletter that preschool teachers share the previous month’s activities. Receipt of this newsletter will be discontinued upon preschool graduation or gladly continued by request.

Preschool Newsletter: The preschool also sends home a monthly newsletter at the end of each month via student mail. This newsletter is full of upcoming events and happenings at preschool. Special notes will be sent home from school with your child as the occasion warrants.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Please feel welcome to talk directly with the teachers about your child and their needs. Our teachers are open to your questions and suggestions. We ask, however, that you respect their need to be involved in the classroom at certain times especially at the start of the day when students are arriving. Meeting with teachers at the end of the school day usually works best, or you are invited to speak with the preschool director at any time as well.

Preschool Bulletin Board: Please take a look at the preschool bulletin board in the entryway. It is a great resource for parents and families. Copies of the current calendars, newsletter, the Pre-K Academic section, and other information of interest are posted and updated regularly. Highlights of handbook are posted as well.

Preschool White Board: Please refer to white board in entryway with daily information (i.e. Snack, Books Read, Songs, Art Project, etc.) This information is meant to be helpful in talking with your preschooler about their day.

E-mail: Please contact us via e-mail. Our address is preschool@messiah-lcms.org. The director checks mail daily (Monday-Friday).

Facebook: Find us on facebook. We use our page to post reminders and share fun pictures of our preschool day. **Monthly calendars are always posted.**

SCHOOL CLOSURES DUE TO WEATHER

School closure information will be on the local radio stations. Decisions regarding school closures will be made by 6:00 a.m. and will be announced on KIRO (710 AM), KOMO (1000 AM), KRKO (1380 AM), KING (1090 AM). The quickest way to find out if Marysville School District will be delayed or closed: <http://www.schoolreport.org> or <http://www.msvl.k12.wa.us>. There also is a link on the preschool web-site.

Our policy is to cancel preschool if the Marysville School District closes. If the Marysville School District starts late, our preschool will start **at the regular time**. However, if you are uncomfortable driving in these conditions, please don't risk it by trying to arrive at school. Your safety and the safety of the children is the main concern.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS OR DISABILITIES

We work closely with the Marysville School District in areas where there is a developmental concern with children that we observe. Students with special education needs can receive help from a variety of programs. Marysville Learning Support Services include preschool for defined developmentally delayed children from age three through five, speech, language or communication, motor or physical development and various services for children with special needs age birth through 21. Parents concerned with the development of their preschool child should request further information concerning the free screening of their child for possible early education assistance.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We strive daily to improve our teaching ministry. Parents and volunteers are very important to us. You may help in the following ways:

Teacher Support: Parents/grandparents/guardians may volunteer to help prepare materials for the classroom, assist in the classroom with special projects, and other projects like bulletin boards as needed and scheduled by staff. There may be projects that can be done from your home as well. (If you are interested in helping in the preschool classroom, a Washington State Patrol background check form must be completed and on file in the preschool office.)

Preschool Fundraiser: We have only one fundraiser each year which allows us to enhance our curriculum, equipment and supplies for the children enrolled in our program. Your support and participation is greatly appreciated and completely voluntary. If you are interested in helping organize this effort, please see the preschool director.

Guest Visitor: If you or a family member have a career or special talent that you would like to share, i.e. fireman, police officer, dental hygienist, musical talent, family and cultural traditions, please let us know, and we may schedule an in-house presentation for the preschoolers.

Harvest Festival: Volunteers are needed for games, kitchen staff, decoration and cleanup. Any funds from this event benefit the preschool and Sunday school programs at Messiah, however, it is primarily a family fun night. This event is usually held the fourth Saturday in October.

Wishing Well: In the entry is a "Wishing Well" poster. Throughout the school year items needed for the preschool will be posted for preschool families or congregation members to provide. Participation is completely voluntary. If you wish to supply an item, simply remove the request slip from the board and return items to the school office. Thank you.

Prayer: Don't forget that the strength of our staff is not alone in physical things. We need your prayers to accomplish the task of helping little ones grow. You can help our teaching and learning ministry through your daily and continual prayers.

We enjoy the privilege of teaching. We want to share it with you and your family. We want to share our love for Christ with you and your family through our teaching ministry. Parents are encouraged to visit preschool at any time. Please remember this is your preschool and your child's education, so come and find out what is happening.