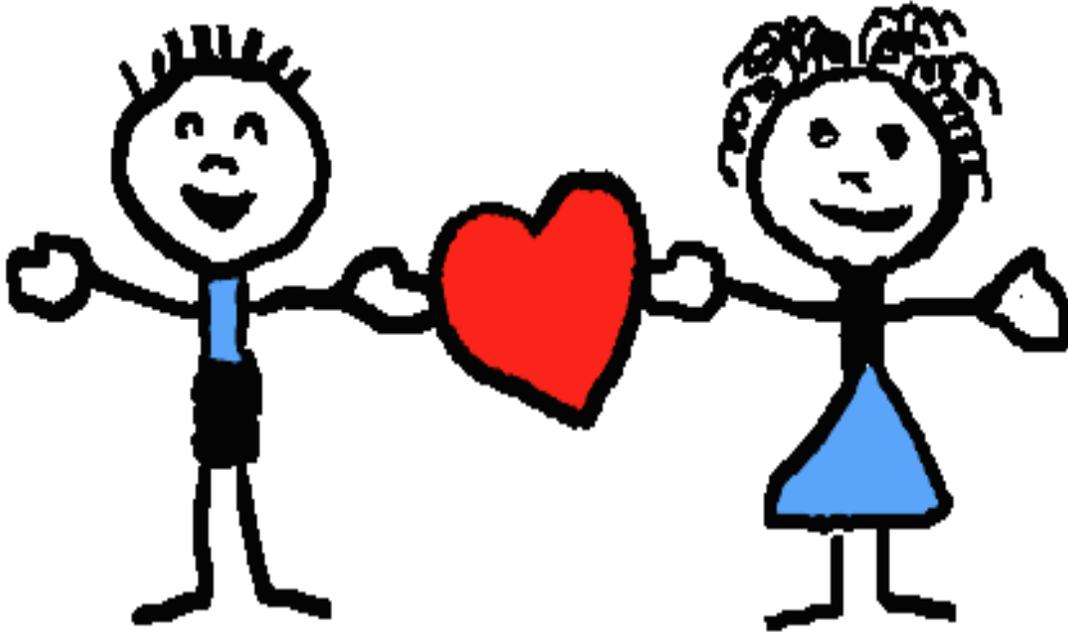


Teaching from the Heart



St. Luke's Preschool

Parent Handbook

Updated: 2020

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I. WELCOME

A Note to Parents

The staff at St. Luke's Preschool is proud to have the opportunity to teach care for your child. We are pleased that you have selected us for your child's preschool experience. We have a very unique and exciting program with endless activities and learning experiences. We also have a genuine love for children of all ages and want only the best for them. Our goal is to help your child become a happy, well-adjusted, and secure individual.

Our school has met the Religiously Exempt requirements set forth by the Virginia Department of Social Services, ensuring that we have well-qualified staff members that have met certain academic and medical requirements as well as participating in the state criminal history record check. In addition, for your child's safety, our building has been inspected and approved by the Chesterfield County Fire Marshall and the Chesterfield County Department of Health. Our preschool carries public liability insurance as well.

The enrollment capacity of our building is 205 children. On any given day, we have no more than 120 children in the building.

Our program does not provide any food services. The children bring a snack and in some cases, lunch, from home each day.

This handbook was written as a reference for you. We hope it will answer many of your questions and give you the information you need to know about our program and staff. We look forward to a fun-filled year with you and your child. If you ever have any concerns or problems, please let us know.

Our Purpose

St. Luke's program offers your child the opportunity to grow and develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically within an atmosphere of love and learning.

A. SPIRITUAL:

1. A special blessing of thanks is said before eating.
2. All classes attend chapel twice a month with the pastor.
3. Celebrating religious holidays (Easter & Christmas).

B. SOCIAL:

1. Developing a feeling of personal worth.
2. Acquiring social skills which enable positive interaction.
3. Demonstrating courtesy and kindness.
4. Developing a love of learning.

C. EMOTIONAL:

1. Learning to separate from parents and home.
 2. Learning values through sharing and taking turns.
 3. Understanding the difference between individual and group.
 4. Getting along with peers.
- D. COGNITIVE:
1. Learning basic skills needed for school readiness.
 2. Using observation skills to gain more information.
 3. Using skills to solve problems.
 4. Exploring cause and effect.
- E. PHYSICAL:
1. Learning healthy habits.
 2. Developing fine and gross motor skills.
 3. Participating in recreational activities.
 4. Learning about personal space.

Physical Facility

Main Floor.....7250 Square Feet

5 classrooms, 3 church offices, Music room, Preschool office, Art room, Library, Pastor's office, Two sets of male and female hallway bathrooms, 2 classroom bathrooms, and the Sanctuary.

Basement.....4000 Square Feet

5 Classrooms, One set of male and female hallway bathrooms, and the Recreation/Activity Area

Fellowship Hall.....2200 Square Feet

The Fellowship Hall is used for family events, puppet shows, plays, and other enrichment activities. All classrooms and the basement recreation room are carpeted. The entire building is heated and air-conditioned. The outdoor playground is completely fenced in and contains heavy, sturdy wooden and plastic equipment with a safe gravel surface throughout the entire play area. The capacity of our building, determined by the architect, is 205.

St. Luke's Preschool contact information:

4101 Fordham Road

Richmond, Virginia, 23236

Phone: 804-276-8303/ Fax 804-276-5215

Michele Hart, Director: director@stlukespreschoolva.com

Website: www.stlukespreschoolva.com

II. STAFF INFORMATION

Staff Qualifications

Each member of our staff is qualified and experienced in working with preschool children of all ages. Many of our teachers are former teachers, child-care workers, or have earned an Early Childhood Certification from John Tyler Community College. The most important quality of each staff member is that they all LOVE children!!! All staff members are certified annually by a physician to be free from any disability that would prevent them from caring for children. In addition, each staff member has received a negative TB test. Each staff member has also participated in the State Police Criminal Record Check assuring that your child will be in safe, loving hands. Staff development is ongoing through conference attendance, workshops, and professional trainings throughout the area.

III. DAILY SCHOOL INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

Creative Play: Children are free to play with toys of their choosing...books, blocks, puzzles, toys, manipulatives, etc.

Direct Instruction: Children participate in daily learning activities and lessons with their teacher.

Group Activities: Large group experiences such as games, stories, finger plays, and circle time.

Recreation: Children have both indoor and outdoor playtime.

Snacks: Children are required to bring an individual snack from home to eat while at school.

Extra Resources: Each class has music with our music teacher and art with our art teacher. We also enjoy plays, puppet shows, and visits from other talented specialists and educators.

Dress

St. Luke's MMO and Preschool does not have a formal dress code. Please take into consideration that children may be painting or working with messy items during the school day and special clothing could be ruined. It is best to "dress for a mess". Children must wear tennis shoes or shoes with tennis shoe bottoms every day to school. Crocs, flip flops, boots, or sandals are not allowed. Children may be asked to sit out during recess if the shoes they are wearing are unsafe. Please label all clothing such as coats, sweaters, gloves, hats, etc. Items that we find with no name on it will be put in the lost and found box in the Preschool Office. PLEASE dress your child appropriately for the weather. The children will go outside to play if the temperature/wind chill is above 32°F.

School Supplies

If you're able, each family is asked to contribute at some point throughout the school year supplies such as baby wipes, Lysol wipes, paper towels, and tissues. Traditional school supplies such as: crayons, pencils, scissors, etc. are typically supplied by the preschool. You will receive information regarding which supplies are needed by Back-to-School Night in September.

Snacks

Children in our 3s, 4s, and JK program should bring a refillable sports/water bottle. **Please label your child's water bottle with a permanent marker.** Our toddlers will be provided with a paper cup from which they will drink water during snack time. Parents are asked to send a nutritional snack in their child's backpack to be eaten during our morning snack break. **Please label your child's snack to avoid confusion.** Listed below are a few appropriate & inappropriate snacks for school:

Acceptable Snacks

Crackers (all kinds)
Cereal (finger size)
Cheese (all kinds)
Bread sticks
Sandwiches
Fruit (peeled and cut)
Lunch meat
Granola bars
Fruit bars
Pretzels
Veggies (carrots & celery)
Graham crackers

Unacceptable Snacks

Cheese Handi-Snacks (with red sticks)
Yogurt/Applesauce/ Pudding/ GOGURT
Pop-top metal cans (fruit, etc.)
Nuts and popcorn (under 3)
Small flakey cereal
Raisins (under 3)
Cookies
Cupcakes
Candy
Marshmallows
Pop-Tarts
Chips- Doritos, Cheetos, Potato, etc.
Donuts

WATER ONLY!!! No other drinks are allowed and will be returned to your child's backpack to be enjoyed outside of school. Thank you for your cooperation.

Photos

Periodically during the school year, we will be taking pictures of the children participating in daily and special activities. These pictures will be given to you either as a gift, placed in the classroom photo album, or posted on our website or Facebook Page. If you do not want your child photographed, please inform your child's teacher and the Preschool Office on the first day of school! New students will sign a **Photo Release Permission Form** to be kept in the office.

Hours

School will be open from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM Monday through Thursday. You are always welcome to come and observe your child or to share something with his or her class. We ask that you please let us know in advance when you are planning to visit. The Director is also available during those hours to help you in any way. Teachers report to school at 9:00 AM and are preparing for their day. Please do not bring your child to school before 9:25 AM, at which time the doors will be unlocked to welcome your child for the day. Doors will be locked from 9:35-12:25. You must use the buzzer located at the carport entrance to enter the school building during these hours.

Holidays and Closings

St. Luke's Preschool will follow the Chesterfield County Public School system for all holidays and closings due to bad weather. If Chesterfield County Public Schools open one hour late, we will also open one hour late (10:30 AM-1:30 PM). If CCPS open two hours late, we will also open two hours late (11:30 AM-2:00 PM). Please pack a lunch for your child on 2-Hour Delay openings. Also, there will be no Extended Day/Stretch N Grow and those credits will transfer.

Items from Home

Children are not allowed to bring toys, candy, or gum to school. To provide comfort during times of stress, the toddlers may bring a special item such as a LABELED blanket or stuffed animal to snuggle with as needed. Please **DO NOT** allow your child to bring any toy weapons (guns, swords, etc.) to school.

A backpack is required for transporting your child's belongings to and from school. Memos, schedules, newsletters, and important information will be sent home in backpacks, put in mailbox cubbies, or emailed to you. If you are sending us a note, payment, etc. please give it directly to your child's teacher. *We DO NOT go through these backpacks every day.* Please make sure that your child has a complete change of clothes in their backpack in case of an accident. Most children feel more comfortable and less embarrassed if they have their own clothing on! **PLEASE LABEL YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK AND CHECK IT EVERY DAY!!**

IV. CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION

Student Evaluations

Our 3s, 4s, and JK teachers do written evaluations in Fall and Spring. Also, parent conferences will be held for 3, 4s, and JK classes in early Spring. Your child's teacher will inform you of specific dates and you may sign up for a time to discuss your child's progress one-on-one with his/her teacher.

Curriculum

Daily lessons focus on specific skills and objectives that are appropriate for each age group. These skills and objectives will be given to you by your child's teacher in the beginning of the school year. Daily lessons are developed from thematic units about holidays, the four seasons, and special days (or weeks) of recognition such as dental health week, fire prevention week, etc. Other thematic units will be indicated on your child's monthly calendar. The 3 year old, 4 year old, and JK classes participate in letter study using the Handwriting Without Tears handwriting program and use Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning as their curriculum guide. These students also participate in Chapel twice a month with the church pastor. All classes visit the library, art room, and music room each week for special classes as well. Information about our curriculum is available on our website at www.stlukespreschoolva.com.

V. DISCIPLINE

At St. Luke's Preschool, we understand that children are just beginning to navigate the world, their feelings, and themselves as individuals and part of a larger group. Typically, a child's behavior is addressed through redirecting, rewarding, communicating clear expectations, and providing consistent consequences. Should behavioral problems arise, children may take a time-out or sit in a "better choice" chair in their classroom. A typical time-out lasts about one minute per year of the child's age (ex: a 3 year old would sit for 3 minutes). If disruptive behavior continues, children may be sent to the Preschool Office and parents will be appropriately informed; especially in cases of chronic misbehavior or severity of misbehavior. A Parent Conference may be necessary in order to come up with strategies that are consistent between home and school. St. Luke's Preschool will make every effort to accommodate and include all types of children with many different needs *within our staffing limits*. Students demonstrating consistent and serious behavioral issues no longer manageable by our staff will be withdrawn from school.

Parent Concerns

If you have a question or concern: We encourage open and cooperative communication, in person, which is most effective to avoid misunderstandings and reach a positive outcome.

Step 1: Talk to your child's teacher.

Step 2: Talk to preschool director if further understanding is necessary.

Step 3: If further problem solving needs to occur, the Preschool Director and Pastor will respond with an advocacy meeting. The members will include those expressing concern, teacher, preschool director and pastor. This will also include the preschool board parent representative and church representative, to allow for objective perspective and who will be charged with offering a compassionate and caring presence, observers of the process and confidential stewards of fact.

VI. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Child Abuse and Neglect

All childcare providers in the State of Virginia are obligated to report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. If this situation should occur, the Director will notify the Child Protective Services Unit of the Department of Social Services.

Medical Needs and Information

St. Luke's Preschool is proud to have a tradition of welcoming children with special needs. Some children have easily discernible needs, such as hearing aids or leg braces. Some children have less visible needs, such as allergies to foods, the environment, or insect bites. St. Luke's MMO and Preschool will do everything possible to create and maintain a safe environment for all students. We are **NOT** equipped to handle life-threatening conditions. For this reason, we request that each parent determine if the normal, routine safety precautions used for all students are sufficient for their own child. For example, the classroom teacher may make every effort to comply with dietary restrictions, but toddlers and older children may "sneak food" or offered food by another student while the teacher is busy elsewhere. St. Luke's **CANNOT** and **WILL NOT** be held responsible for these incidents. There is a possibility that your child's classroom will be a peanut-free room. Your child's teacher will notify parents if this is the case. Please adhere to these restrictions. Similarly, environmental risks will be monitored to the best extent possible, but classrooms will not be changed to suit the needs of one child to the detriment of others. Any child with a serious allergy that requires emergency medication (Epipen) must have a signed MAT form on file specifying the severity and treatment of the allergy. **ST. LUKE'S PRESCHOOL, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL STAFF MEMBERS, WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES TO YOUR CHILD SO LONG AS ORDINARY CARE, PROVIDED TO ALL STUDENTS, IS PROVIDED.**

State Licensing requires us to have an up-to-date immunization record and a copy of the birth certificate on file for each child enrolled. Virginia Law also requires that each child have a signed Medical Release Form on file. This form is required for every child regardless of allergies or health issues.

Illness/Sick Policy

Control of communicable illnesses among students is a major concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illnesses in our preschool have been developed with the help of the health department and local pediatricians. In order to protect all students and staff, as well as your own child, parents are required to keep sick children at home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

- * Fever of over 100°F (Children must be fever-free for 24 hours BEFORE returning to school.)
- * Uncontrollable coughing
- * Diarrhea, vomiting, or an upset stomach
- * Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache
- * Thickened/colored discharge and/or drainage from eyes, nose, ears or wounds

Children who develop any of these symptoms (including diarrhea) will need to be picked up immediately. We appreciate your cooperation with this policy.

Injuries

We will inform parents of any injury occurring during the school day. Cuts and scrapes will be cleaned with soap and water and covered with a band aid when necessary. We will not remove splinters or foreign objects from ears, noses, etc.

No Weapons Policy

For the safety of the children, we respectfully ask that all parents or guardians including those in law enforcement please not bring any weapons into the preschool. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

VII. ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

Registration

In-House Registration for the upcoming school year begins in January. Registering at this time guarantees your child a spot in an age-level appropriate class. State regulation requires certain documents be collected during the registration process. A completed registration form, medical release form, registration fee, tuition contract, and birth certificate (if not on file) are required at the time of registration. Before your child can attend school, a copy of your child's up-to-date immunization records is required.

Tuition

Tuition is due by the 15th day of each month. Tuition is collected a month in advance (ex: April's tuition is due March 1st). September's tuition is due in May or at the time of enrollment if later than May. The last payment of the school year is due on April 15th for the month of May. If we have not received your payment **BY** the 15th of the month (even if the 15th is on a Saturday), you will be charged a late fee of \$15.00 for EACH CHILD you have enrolled. If payments are missed for two consecutive months, your child will be withdrawn from the program unless special arrangements have been made with the Treasurer, Shirley Gary. Families paying tuition monthly must sign up for automatic draft (ACH). Families paying tuition annually or semi-annually can pay by check (payable to St. Luke's Preschool) or cash. Please remember that tuition amounts remain the same each month regardless of how many days are missed due to snow closings, holidays, illnesses or other reasons not within our control. Changes to your tuition contract can be made at any time by contacting the Preschool Treasurer, Shirley Gary.

Returned Check/ACH Policy

If your check/ACH is returned to us from the bank due to insufficient funds, you will be responsible for the original amount of the check plus a \$15.00 returned check/ACH fee.

Attendance

Attendance at St. Luke's MMO and Preschool is not compulsory. If your child is extremely unhappy and is unable to adjust, you have the right to withdraw your child. Conversely, the school also retains the right to dismiss any child who is unhappy or unable to conform to our program.

Withdrawal

A thirty (30) day written notice of withdrawal is required when withdrawing your child. Failure to keep tuition current will lead to your child's immediate dismissal. Special payment arrangements can be made with the Preschool Treasurer, Shirley Gary, if necessary.

Refunds

No refund or credit is given for missed days due to weather or illness. We will follow the decision of Chesterfield County Public Schools to add days to the school calendar if needed due to excessive weather closings. Also, as stated on your registration form, your registration fee is non-refundable.

Potty Training Requirements

Children entering the 3s, 4s, or JK program must be potty trained. We understand that children do have accidents. However, it becomes problematic when older children consistently have accidents because these classrooms are not equipped for diaper changing. Also, please make sure your child has gone to the bathroom before coming to school.

VIII. PARKING LOT AND PLAYGROUND

Carpool/Pick-up

Many of our parents and caretakers carpool to school. We maintain a list for each child of the people who are allowed to pick your child up from school. If someone other than a parent or approved person will be picking up your child, you must send in a written note or call the Preschool Office explaining the change.

PLEASE BE ON TIME. It is often upsetting to children when their "ride" is late dropping them off or picking them up. Teachers will begin their activities promptly at 9:35 AM and children will expect you at the door when it is opened at 12:25 PM. There is a late fee of \$5.00 per minute for every minute past 12:40 PM during the regular school day and 2:10 PM during Extended Day. We understand at times there are extenuating circumstances that keep you from arriving on time. If you are going to be late, please notify the preschool office at 276-8303. It will be at the Director's discretion whether a late fee will be charged. Repeat occurrences are most likely to result in being charged a late fee.

Parking Lot Safety

Please park in designated parking spaces only. If you do not have white lines on each side of your car when you park, you are not in an approved parking space. Parking in spots designated for handicapped drivers is NOT ALLOWED. Parking in a handicapped spot (no matter how brief) requires a handicapped license plate or temporary tag. During arrival and dismissal there are many adults and children in the parking lot. Please **drive slowly** and carefully, following the white arrows, or otherwise marked traffic pattern, when using the lower parking lot. Children CANNOT BE LEFT UNATTENDED in cars while you are in the building picking up or dropping off your preschooler. As we all know, it only takes a second for a tragedy to occur.

Playground and Front Lawn

If using the playground after dismissal time, parents need to supervise their children closely at all times. **The Preschool is not responsible for any injuries that may occur after school is dismissed.** Children over three years old are not permitted to play on the smaller playground and all rocks should remain on the ground and off the equipment. Also, children must be kept out of the Memorial Garden on the front lawn and off the brick church sign. Please leave the white rocks where they are. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

IX. EXTENDED DAYS (Lunch Bunch)

"Lunch Bunch" or extended days are offered to all students two years of age or older. During Lunch Bunch, children will have lunch and enjoy extra activities and playground time until 2 PM. On these days, the children need to bring a lunch in addition to their regular snack. The same appropriate snack guidelines apply to lunch (no Gogurt, yogurt, canned fruit, pudding, etc.) The children can drink water only with lunch. The fee for an extended day(M,W,Th) is \$10. Extended Day sign-up forms are located outside the Preschool Office. Payment is due at the time of registration and must be received at least one day in advance to appropriately staff. If your child is sick on an extended day that you have paid for, it is your responsibility to notify the office so that you will be credited for another extended day.

****Note:** 4 year old classes have some extended days built into their regular schedule and JK always dismisses at 2:00. The sign-up/payment procedure mentioned above does NOT pertain to these circumstances.

X. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND SCHOOL PARTIES

School Parties

All holiday parties are celebrated in the classroom. Sign-up sheets may be posted outside your child's classroom for you to contribute items for these parties. Celebrations are held during your child's normal snack time. These parties include Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Other holidays may be celebrated in different ways by different age groups.

Birthday Celebrations

A child's birthday is a very important and exciting event that we enjoy celebrating! If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday during school, we ask that you bring one of the approved treats (listed below) to share with your child's class. Please do not pass out personal invitations to your child's birthday party during school hours unless every child in the class is invited.

Approved Birthday Treats

*Cookies (all types)

*Fruit/Cheese

*Rice Krispy Bars

*Great Big Cookie

Your child's birthday is celebrated during regular snack time. Please bring the treat during morning drop off or bring it in during snack time. PLEASE DO NOT BRING FAVORS OR GOODY BAGS FOR THE CHILDREN. Special drinks, ice cream, cupcakes, and/or cakes are not allowed by the church. Due to food allergies, we ask that all treats be store-bought items.

XI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR our Toddler students: Please Provide for your child:

1. A change of clothing.
2. Disposable diapers.
3. Name tags on bags, cups, snacks, stuffed animals, blankets, clothing, etc.
4. A snack that can be eaten independently.
5. A special stuffed animal, blanket, or favorite object from home to help with adjusting to being away from parents.
6. Properly-fitting tennis shoes for both indoor and outdoor play.