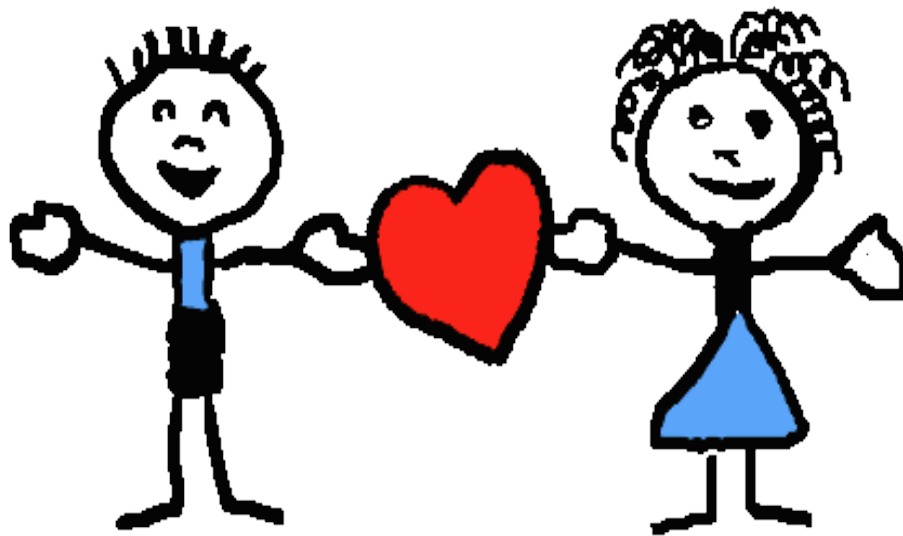


St. Luke's Preschool Parent Handbook



Teaching from the Heart

August 2023

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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 and care for your child. We are pleased that you have selected us for your child's preschool experience. We have a 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 school building is 136 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 preschool 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.

Our 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

4 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 pea-gravel surface throughout the entire play area.

Location of St. Luke's Preschool and our contact information:

4101 Fordham Road
 Richmond, Virginia, 23236
 Phone: 804-276-8303/ Fax 804-674-5215
 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. Please visit: stlukespreschoolva.com for staff bios.

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 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 will be taken to 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.** 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

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

Pretzels
Veggies (carrots & celery)
Graham crackers

Marshmallows
Pop-Tarts
Chips- Doritos, Cheetos, Potato, etc.
Donuts

WATER ONLY--- No other drinks are allowed in the building 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. This will be in your child's Back-to-School packet.

Hours and Entry

School will be open from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM Monday through Thursday. These are regular preschool hours, not including Extended Day (Lunch Bunch). Teachers report to school at 9:00 AM and are busy 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. All doors remain locked from 9:35–12:25. You must use the buzzer located at the **carport entrance to enter the school building during these hours.** Other than dismissal, when other doors are attended by a staff member, the carport entrance (with buzzer) is the single-entry during school hours and is monitored by office personnel.

Holidays and Closings

St. Luke's Preschool will follow the Chesterfield County Public School system for major holidays* and closings due to inclement 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 delayed openings. Also, there will be no Extended Day/Stretch N Grow on delayed opening days and those credits will transfer.

*Please refer to "Calendar of Events" at: stlukespreschoolva.com for additional details

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. Class calendars, event flyers, and important information will be sent home in backpacks, put in mailbox cubbies, or emailed to you. If you are sending us a payment, time-sensitive form or note, etc. please give it directly to the preschool office. *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 and that this change of clothing remains seasonally appropriate. **PLEASE LABEL YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK AND REMEMBER TO CHECK IT DAILY!**

V. Evaluations and Curriculum

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 provided by your child's teacher in the beginning of the school year. Overall, 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 the acclaimed Handwriting Without Tears handwriting program which incorporates fun and varied manipulatives to build a solid foundation for letter recognition, handwriting, and early-literacy skills. All classes visit the library, art room, and music room each week for special classes as well. Students attend Chapel monthly in the church sanctuary with the pastor as well.

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 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 may 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.

Special Needs and Information

St. Luke's Preschool will do everything possible to create and maintain a safe environment for all students. St. Luke's Preschool is proud to have a tradition of welcoming children with special needs, developmentally and/or medically, so long as the child's needs are being met while balancing the overall needs of the preschool and its students. Open communication and preparation yield the best results when devising a plan suitable for both the family of a child with special needs and our preschool. Any child with a serious allergy that requires emergency medication (Epipen) must have a signed MAT form (completed by your child's doctor and re-evaluated by the family) on file specifying the severity and treatment of the allergy. Our staff continues to meet the requirements set forth for First Aid and CPR training.

State Licensing requires us to have an immunization record and a copy of the child's 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 and was included in your child's Registration Form. Immunization records for any child less than 2 years old will need to be updated per current policy.

Illness/Sick Policy

Control of communicable illnesses among students is certainly important. 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. To best protect students and staff, 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
- * 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.

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. *If your child already has an immunization record on file and was 2 years old or older at that visit, no update is necessary per current policy.*

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 may be charged a late fee of \$20.00 for EACH CHILD you have enrolled. If payments are missed for two consecutive months, your child may 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 at: 804-276-7000.

Returned Check/ACH Policy

If your check/ACH is returned to us from the bank due to insufficient funds, you may be responsible for the original amount of the check plus a \$20.00 returned check/ACH fee.

Withdrawal

A thirty (30) day written notice of withdrawal is required when withdrawing your child. However, when withdrawing after March 1, families are required to pay the remaining 3 months tuition. A student may be dismissed if tuition is not kept current. Special payment arrangements can be made with the Preschool Treasurer, Shirley Gary, if necessary, at: 804-276-7000.

Please know that every effort will be made to partner with parents, teachers, and any relevant outside resources before any withdrawal of a child with special considerations would occur. As previously stated, St. Luke's considers a successful balance to be one that meets a child's needs while meeting the needs of our overall preschool population and staffing resources.

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 should be potty trained. We understand that children do have accidents. The upstairs 2- and 3-Year-old classrooms have access to bathrooms with child-size toilets and sinks. Currently, our downstairs 3-Year-old classroom uses hall bathrooms directly across from their classroom. Please work with your children on potty proficiency and make sure your child has gone to the bathroom before coming to school.

VIII. PARKING LOT AND PLAYGROUND

Carpool/Pick-up

Some 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. A new pick-up should be prepared to present identification to the teacher upon request.

PLEASE BE ON TIME. It is often upsetting to children when their "ride" is late dropping them off or picking them up from school. Also, teachers will begin their activities promptly after drop-off and are attending to other duties directly following dismissal. 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. (This fee is \$10.00 for a pick-up past 12:40PM during the regular school day and 2:10PM during Extended Day).

Parking Lot Safety

Please park in designated parking spaces only. Parking in a handicapped spot 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 may only take a second for an accident to occur.

Playground

If using the playground after dismissal time, parents are responsible for the supervision of their children closely at all times. **The Preschool is not responsible for any injuries or incidents 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 and any toys returned to the proper storage container. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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 **except for Tuesday** is \$10. Extended Day on Tuesdays includes an enrichment program called Stretch N Grow. This is a 30-minute fun and active program complete with its own outside coach and changing themes! See stretchngrowva.com for details.

Extended Day sign-up forms are typically located outside the Preschool Office and on our website for printing and completion. Form and payment are due at the time of registration and should 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. Your child's teacher will offer sign-up for any needed items. Celebrations are held during your child's normal snack time. These parties may include Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Other holidays may be celebrated in different ways by different age groups. See your child's monthly classroom calendar.

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

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. *Any children with an allergy should provide the teacher with appropriate snacks (for ex: individually wrapped Rice Krispy Treats) for these occasions.*

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.