

## **WELCOME TO OUR PRESCHOOL**

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Preschool! We are happy that you have chosen our program for your child's preschool enrichment. We look forward to providing a year filled with exciting and rewarding experiences to all our Preschool friends and their families.

We hope the information provided in this handbook will help you to gain an understanding and appreciation for your child's preschool experience. The aim of preschool is to provide a basic foundation for your child's education and to make each child's first experience with school a successful and happy one. As teachers and parents, we must remember that a positive self-image is the main ingredient to a child's success. It is our job as parents and teachers to make this a priority.

Please feel free to contact us at any time. We are here for you and your family and it will be fun getting to know you. We feel it is a privilege to have your child with us and we look forward to a year that is filled with laughter, love, and learning.

Enjoy your year with us!

Beth Ann Lehr, Director

Grace Lutheran Preschool  
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## **ABOUT GRACE PRESCHOOL**

Grace Preschool has a wonderful reputation in Henderson County because of our academic curriculum. Our program provides a foundation for life-long learning and solid preparation for the educational and social demands of the structured Kindergarten and elementary school day. Grace Lutheran Preschool was rated the prestigious awards of "Best Preschool", "Best Childcare" and "Best Parent/Child Program" and "Best Aftercare" in Western North Carolina by WNC Parent magazine. We were also recently awarded the "Best Preschool in Hendersonville" by the Times News.

At Grace Preschool, special classes are included in the curriculum such Phonics for 3's and Pre-K that teaches basic sounds. It is taught in a way that children enjoy, so that some of our children are reading before they leave our Preschool. Spanish/Sign Language is taught from the Walkers to Pre-K and integrated into the curriculum throughout the day. All students attend Bible Storytime which is taught by the church religious education team. We use the Frolic curriculum character development themes that cover a variety of topics, including how to be a kind friend, patience, sharing, calming yourself, asking for help, and using your gifts to help our world. Music is an integral part of the curriculum in all classes with weekly Music and Movement/Yoga classes for all ages. Our Pre-K has two special classes to enhance their personal knowledge with Geography/Diversity and Mindfulness.

A dynamic staff, church support, parent and community participation create a family atmosphere that makes for a unique learning experience for all involved. Parents, Grandparents, and Care Providers are always welcome to volunteer at the Preschool. Opportunities include the Weekly Reader program, "In-House" Field Trip presenter, the Preschool Playgroup, and the March Book Swap.

**Updated on a daily and weekly basis:**

**Facebook:** [gracepreschoolhendersonville](https://www.facebook.com/gracepreschoolhendersonville) **Instagram:** [gracelutheranpreschoolhendo](https://www.instagram.com/gracelutheranpreschoolhendo)

**Website:** [www.gracehendersonville.com](http://www.gracehendersonville.com) (Click on the Preschool link)

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### **GRACE PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

Our philosophy is based on the belief that children learn best in an early childhood program that provides developmentally appropriate educational experiences in an integrated setting. Our early childhood program is designed to provide a stimulating Christian learning environment that supports the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of every child. In this engaging environment, children learn through appropriate play experiences that encourage active participation in learning. Teachers guide, support, and when needed, directly teach our children developmentally appropriate play and social skills. Our aim is to build a community of learners by providing children with enriching experiences to develop self-confidence, independence and strong cognitive and social skills. We respect the dignity, worth, and individuality of each child and are committed to helping children achieve their full potential. Our goal is to help children grow up confident in their own identity and respectful of other people. Grace Preschool recognizes the significant relationship among teachers, students, parents, and families and encourages continuous collaboration in a climate of mutual respect, cooperation and shared responsibility.

### **GRACE PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM**

"Knowledge enters the mind gradually, almost unconsciously. It is the teacher's job to plant knowledge like a seed, tend to it with encouragement and love, and nurture it while it grows and blooms." *Anonymous*

The teachers and support staff of Grace Preschool provide such an atmosphere for all our students to grow and bloom. We employ highly qualified staff dedicated to providing the very best of educational experiences for your child. Our Preschool establishes the foundation for life-long learning in a safe and loving environment.

Based on the belief that children learn through play, active manipulation of their environment, life experience and communicating with peers and adults, the curriculum is designed to facilitate children's involvement in their own learning. The program balances active and quiet play and independent learning and group participation where teachers facilitate the children's interactions with each other and their environment. Teachers observe each child's activities in order to tailor and expand curriculum to meet individual needs and interests. Parents are encouraged to maintain close communication with staff and be a partner in their child's learning.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

We are very proud of the variety of educational programs that will stimulate your child and prepare them socially and intellectually for Kindergarten. From the Walking program to the Pre-K program, Grace offers a creative and loving Christian-based environment for your child. An exciting educational curriculum follows the seasons and events of the year, plus pre-math, pre-reading, refinement of fine and gross motor skills development, cooking projects, social skills with their peers and staff, and Spanish/Sign Language. Our curriculum for three's and Pre-K children includes the above, as well as, an introduction to Music & Movement that incorporates sign language and yoga, and weekly Bible Storytime with the church religious education team. Pre-K classes also enjoy enrichment in Geography and Mindfulness every week beginning in October of each year. Additionally, the Two's, Three's and Pre-K children receive phonics instruction to help facilitate early reading skills. All children are assessed in the Spring of each year and Pre-K twice a year to determine their readiness for Kindergarten. Pre-K results are shared with parents during scheduled conferences to discuss their progress in our program and readiness for Kindergarten.

## COMMUNICATION

Grace Preschool is a family environment in which parents and staff works together as a team. Communication is the key to our collaboration. The following are ways that the Director and staff will communicate with you:

- Weekly email updates from the Director (please read these weekly)
- Monthly letter and calendar from the classroom staff
- Phone calls
- Meetings with staff and parents as needed
- Facebook and Instagram

## PRESCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Your child's teacher will send home a monthly newsletter and calendar to keep you informed about what your child is learning at school that month. Please use this as a tool to talk with your child every day about what they are experiencing at Preschool. Please also check your child's backpack on a daily basis to ensure you are updated with any news from your child's teacher.

Each week, you will receive a Weekly Preschool Update from the Director to your e-mail account listed on your registration paperwork. Please read it for necessary information. Since we use the e-mail system as our main communication tool, please notify us of e-mail changes as they occur. If you would like a grandparent, babysitter, or caregiver to receive this e-mail, please give us their email address. Hard copies will not be sent home unless requested.

Grace Preschool has a **Facebook** account that posts updates and events about our Preschool. You will be requested to fill out a Media Form that asks for your permission to post your child's photos and videos. The Facebook address is <https://www.facebook.com/gracepreschoolhendersonville>. Please "Like Us" to get periodic notifications. Children's names are never listed on Facebook or any web sites.

## UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If there are any unusual circumstances at home, such as illness or death, birth of a baby, divorce, parents' vacations, or changes in childcare arrangements (such as a new nanny or babysitter), please notify the teachers or the Preschool office so we can work with you as a team to support you and your child.

## TEACHER CONFERENCES

Our Preschool believes that it is a team effort to teach your child and we will communicate how your child is progressing throughout the year. Please let us know if you have a concern about your child or their classroom at any time. While staff welcome and value the opportunity to meet and talk with parents, it is difficult for the staff to speak with parents when class is beginning or ending or while it is in session. Therefore, parents are encouraged to communicate through e-mail, call the Preschool office to set-up an appointment, or contact your child's teacher in person or by phone. Teachers encourage parents to maintain close communication with staff and be a partner in their child's learning. Communication about your child's progress can be discussed during a planned meeting or conference with your child's teacher daily after school for any immediate concerns.

Our Pre-K and 3's teaching staff assess children in October and March for Kindergarten preparation, academic, and social-emotional readiness. Pre-K parents are encouraged to meet with Pre-K staff to discuss their child's performance in the classroom and develop strategies for Kindergarten readiness. All age children are assessed in March and results are mailed to parents. If you would like to meet to discuss the assessment results, please schedule this with your child's teacher.

**For your child's healthy self-esteem, please do not to say negative things about your child in their presence.**

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL FAMILIES

Grace Preschool believes that all children, parents, and staff should be treated with respect at all times. Respect is observed by our words and actions. As parents and educators, we show respect by how we treat children, how we teach them to respect their friends, and how we treat each other.

Our Preschool has an Open Door policy in which parents can and should discuss their concerns with the Director. If at any time you have a concern about a teacher, a child in your child's class, another parent, or Preschool policies, please see the Director. Out of respect for all Grace Preschool children, parents, and staff, please do not discuss Preschool issues with other parents or in your child's presence.

We believe that all of our children are growing and learning each day. It is our responsibility to teach them communication skills that will help them get along with others throughout their life. Since they are growing, please be patient and know that these skills are a work in progress. Be assured that we are doing our very best to teach them and these skills take many years to learn.

We encourage our Preschool children to socialize with everyone in their assigned class and while on the playground, all-age group children. We listen to their conversations in the classroom and on the playground. At all times, we encourage children to learn social and communication skills by problem-solving, use of kind words, and respect of each other's needs and ideas. If your child has a problem at school with another child, we ask that you contact the child's teacher or Director with your concerns. Please do not contact the other

child's parent or discuss confidential information about children with other parents. It is our responsibility to handle all child-related issues that occur at our Preschool.

Manners are taught in our classrooms and reinforced throughout the Preschool. Please have your child practice using respectful words at home such as "Please, Thank you, and Excuse me".

## **OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

### **Three schedules offered:**

Monday through Friday,  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
Tuesday and Thursday

### **Additional Programs offered:**

#### **Earlybirds**

**Aftercare** during the academic school year: Monday through Thursday

**Summer Camp**- Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, the end of May through August, for children who are registered at our Preschool.

### **Preschool Hours:**

**Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**

**Earlybirds:** Large Activity Room from 8:00-8:25 AM, located at the Preschool East entrance door

**Drop-in basis**, there is no sign-up sheet,

The purchase of a fob is suggested for quick entrance, \$10 cash only user fee.

**Normal Arrival:** 8:30 a.m. Doors close at 8:45, located at the Preschool Main entrance doors.

**11:30 Dismissal:** 11:30-11:45, Doors close at 11:45, located at the Preschool Main entrance doors

**Aftercare:** Monday-Thursday, 11:45-1:30

**1:30 Dismissal:** Begins at 1:20, Ends at 1:30, located at the Preschool Main entrance doors

**Summer Camp:** Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, end of May through August, 8:30-1:00

Doors open at 1:20

On bad weather days, you and your child's safety is our utmost concern at our preschool, so please exercise good judgment on whether or not to bring your child.

### **Ages of our Preschoolers:**

Grace Lutheran Preschool is an academic preschool program for the following ages:

Walkers (13 mths-24 mths.)	One classroom
Two's (2 and 3 yr. olds)	Two classrooms
Three's (3 and 4 yr. olds)	Two classrooms
Pre-K (4 & 5 yr. olds)	Two classrooms

For children with their 5 year-old birthdays from June-August, they may stay an extra year if recommended by the Pre-K staff and requested by parents. There are two Pre-K classrooms that have different teachers that teach the same material but in their own manner so that each year is fresh and different. This allows the children to be in classes with some of the children that stay back an extra year and have the familiarity with the staff and building.

### **CLASS PLACEMENT**

Your child's class placement is based on many factors including child's school schedule, gender, age, social and developmental level, and personality match with staff. All of our staff is excellent in their ability to teach your child and bring out the best in them. Please trust that we will make the best decision where your child will be placed. We cannot honor teacher, friends, and class requests.

If openings occur within the school year or during summer break, families that have requested a different schedule preference will be notified first. Children that are currently students in our Preschool or have registered for the Fall will be given first preference.

### **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS OFFERED**

#### **EARLYBIRDS**

Earlybirds is available in the Large Activity Room from 8:00-8:25 AM for children on a **drop-in basis, there is no sign-up sheet**. Your child will be escorted to their classroom at 8:25 AM. The charge is \$2.00 per day.

#### **Earlybirds:**

**Fobs:** If you need a fob, please bring \$10 in cash for your fob deposit to the Preschool Office. We will return the \$10 deposit to you when you turn-in your fob.

**Earlybird Payment:** Please pay for the maximum amount of days you expect to use for the month. Any credit balances will carry forward.

**EARLYBIRDS WILL NOT BE HELD ON DELAY DAYS.**

#### **AFTERCARE**

Aftercare is offered Monday through Thursday from 11:45-1:30 for \$10.00 per day. This program is an opportunity for students to play with other children and make friends. Play is outside for most of the time and children eat their lunch provided by their care provider. Intentional activities are provided to enhance Preschool themes.

#### **Aftercare Sign-up Policy:**

- 1) Aftercare sign-ups are located on a clipboard by class age on the bookcase to the left of the Preschool office door.
  - 2) Children may be signed-up monthly, weekly, or daily when you have determined that your child will need to stay.
  - 3) It is the responsibility of the parent to sign-up or delete a child from the Aftercare list.
- If your child is sick on a day they are signed-up for Aftercare, you do not need to come to the Preschool to cross-off their name on the sign-up list. We will do that.

**4) Sign-ups on a daily basis:**

After you drop-off your child, please sign them up on the clipboard.  
If your child is not signed-up, they may not be able to stay because we need to stay in teacher to child ratios for this program.

**Calls to the office for Aftercare sign-ups should be on an emergency basis only.**

Please do not email the office staff since they may not be able to look at their emails until children leave Preschool for the day and will miss your email.

**5) You may sign-up your child on the waiting list on the day needed or in advance.**

At 9:00, we will know who is at Preschool and who will be staying.

We will call you to let you know if we have availability.

**6) Payment is due at the beginning of the month for the entire month.**

If you don't use Aftercare on a regular basis, please put a lump sum into your Aftercare account and it will be deducted as your child uses the days.

### **SUMMER CAMP**

Summer Camp is an optional program Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30-1:00. It runs from the end of May to the middle of August. Your child must sign-up in advance to attend the program. Earlybirds is not offered. All Summer Camp fees must be paid by the last day of Summer Camp for your child to attend our school in the Fall.

### **TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE**

Daily activities include a variety of active and quiet individual and group projects. A typical day consists of the following: Center Time, Circle Time, art projects, cooking, creative expression, sand and water play, blocks, books, games, puzzles, science exploration, outside play, and our special classes.

### **CIRCLE TIME**

Circle Time helps reinforce a sense of classroom community, respect for others, listening and language skills, turn-taking, and self-esteem. Children learn to participate in a group and how to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Children also learn to respect one another's ideas and feelings. The ability to communicate is one of the most important and essential life skills that a child can acquire. It takes time, patience, and experience to strengthen a child's ability to communicate.

### **EXERCISE**

Grace Preschool believes that exercise is very important for the physical and mental health of your child. As a preschool, we will provide at least ½ hour of gross motor play per day either outside on our playgrounds or inside if the weather is inclement. Children play outside unless the temperature goes below 16 Degrees Fahrenheit. Please dress your child for seasonal outside weather play.

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS/ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

A child may register for our program any time throughout the year as long as there is a spot available in the child age class. Families are encouraged to tour our Preschool to observe our classrooms and meet our friendly staff and children. Our Preschool is very intentional about creating a Preschool family and we want you to see that environment firsthand.

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**Registration Fee:** A non-refundable registration fee of **\$85.00** is due when a child is registered. This registration fee is for the purpose of securing a place for your child in our program.

### **POLICIES CONCERNING TUITION**

We are a ministry of Grace Lutheran Church and therefore financially separate from them. We have our own budget and financial commitments. Tuition is calculated on a cost basis for the full school year and broken down into a monthly fee for your convenience.

With that in mind, the following financial policies are in place in order for us to be consistent with all families and remain in business. No deductions can be made for absences due to illness, vacations, holidays, or closings. Families choose to be gone for a variety of reasons during the school year, and sometimes it is for extended periods. Tuition payment is required for the time that they absent to hold their child's spot in the room and school.

**Tuition:** As stated in the Tuition Agreement, signed by the enrolling parent, tuition must be paid by first day of each month, regardless of what day of the week it falls on (except the month of January). Although the first may fall on a weekend and/or we are closed due to school not in session, it is still due by the first of the month. Payments should be made by check to *Grace Lutheran Preschool*. For those that are paying tuition and live out of the State of NC, please make sure that we have your check at the Preschool by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month.

If you would like to pay for multiple months, checks must be written for only months in the calendar year. (Large installment checks should be for the months of September through December and/or January through May).

### **WAYS TO PAY TUITION**

- **Preschool mailbox** located by the Preschool office or Earlybirds
  - **The 24/7 Mailbox** is available for your convenience and is located outside the East door (Earlybird entrance).
- Checks, money orders or cashier's checks only**, no cash please. The 24/7 box has a lock, but is not a depository like at a bank.

**-Mail to the Preschool address:** Grace Lutheran Preschool, 1245 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. West, Hendersonville, NC 28739  
Attention: Beth Ann Lehr. Please do not send it in your child's class folder, book bag, or lunchbox, or give it to your child's teacher, or staff at drop-off and dismissal.



**-Online payment through your bank:** Processing may take up to a week for us to receive payment. To ensure that the Preschool receives your payment by the first of the month, please arrange with your bank to have your check delivered to the Preschool by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month.

The bank needs to mail the check to the Preschool address: Grace Lutheran Preschool, 1245 6th Ave. West, Hendersonville, NC 28739. Attention: Beth Ann Lehr. Put your child's name in the memo area, so we know who sent it.

Please do not combine with any other payments. Tuition is a separate account.

**All Checks Written to the Preschool:** Please write separate checks for each program. For example, Tuition, and Earlybirds/Aftercare need to be separate checks from each other. Earlybirds and Aftercare can be combined.

**CASH PAYMENTS:** If you chose to pay in cash, please bring it to the Preschool Office. All cash payments need to be receipted by office staff.

**Other Programs:**

Earlybirds and Aftercare can be combined in one check. Tuition is a separate check.

**Day Rate: \$20** If you would like to have your child attend the Preschool on a day that they are not normally scheduled, if space is available on that day, you may send them to school for a **fee of \$20**. Please call the Preschool office to see if that day is available in your child.

### **LATE TUITION POLICY**

The Financial Department understands that there are times when families face financial difficulties. Please notify the Preschool office **before the first of the month** to communicate your concerns and work out a solution.

If a payment is not made by the **first of the month**, a \$15 late-fee will be charged and the Late Tuition policy will go into effect. There is one "Oops" (no \$15 late fee assessed) given per family, per school year. In order to meet our financial commitments, there is no grace period. **For all payments made after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month, the charge is \$20.**

**In order for your child to continue to attend at Grace, your account must be current.** To return to Grace Preschool, any tuition owed must be paid in full. If a student is dropped from the Grace Preschool program, the student must register again, and may rejoin the program if space is available.

**Late Payment example:**

Tuition payment received August 3<sup>rd</sup> = considered an "oops", no late fee charged

Tuition payment received November 2<sup>nd</sup> = \$15 late fee is charged

Tuition payment received February 3<sup>rd</sup> = \$15 late fee is charged

**Policy regarding tuition paid late three times in a school year:**

After three months of late payments, all future payments must be received by the first of the month in order to continue to be enrolled in the Preschool. Three late fees may result in the removal of your child from the program.

**POLICY FOR NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS (NSF), LATE TUITION FOR EMERGENCIES,  
& HOLDING CHECKS**

The Preschool is a ministry of Grace Lutheran Church and therefore financially separate from them. We have our own budget and financial commitments. With that in mind, the following financial policies are in place in order for us to be consistent with all families and remain in business.

**Checks returned for Non-Sufficient Funds Policy:**

- Assessment of a \$25 fee for each check returned for NSF
- Assessment of a \$15 late fee if the check was a tuition payment
- Individual/family must pay all extra fees (NSF and Late Tuition fee) plus current tuition in cash, cashier's check, or money order, not with a personal check.
- After the second returned check from the same individual/family during any one school year, that individual/family will need to make other payment arrangements for the remainder of the school year (cash, cashier's check, or money order, not with a personal check).

**Late Tuition for Emergency Situations:**

The Preschool Financial Department understands that there are times when families face financial difficulties. The following policy is in effect to aid a family struggling with temporary financial issues.

- The family must notify the Preschool office immediately if a late payment will be occurring and **no later** than the day tuition is due.
- The Preschool Director will determine a "good faith" first payment amount that will be due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. This will allow the child to remain enrolled in the Preschool and secure the child's space in their class.
- The child must stay home until the "good faith" payment is made.
- Families must pay the "good faith" payment at arrival on the day the child returns to school and make a second payment (remainder of the tuition) by the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month.
- If after the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month, the second tuition payment has not been made, the child will be withdrawn from the school and their space filled in the class.
- When it is financially feasible for the family to pay tuition later in the year, a child may rejoin the program, if space is available. To return to Grace Preschool within the same year, the student must register again, complete additional forms, and pay the registration fee.

### **Holding Checks in the Preschool Office:**

- The Preschool office cannot hold checks

### **WITHDRAWAL AND CHANGE OF SCHEDULE**

To withdrawal from the program, or make a schedule change, the appropriate form must be completed and returned to the Preschool office by the **last business day of the month prior to the requested change.** For example: Leaving or change in November, notify office before the last business day of the month of September. You will be responsible for the following month's tuition payment if the Director is not contacted. Tuition will **not be refunded** for the rest of the month in which the child withdraws.

Children may rejoin the program, if space is available. To return to Grace Preschool within the same year, the student must register again, complete additional forms, and pay the registration fee.

### **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURES**

**Please communicate these directives to all people that pick-up your child:**

For safety and security reasons, all outside doors of the Preschool are locked when school is in session. The Main Preschool Entrance is the only door used for entering and exiting the Preschool during Preschool hours. The East door is used only for Earlybirds. Please wait in the foyer until the Preschool Office staff opens the Preschool main entrance door. For emergency purposes, all visitors are asked to sign-in on the Sign-In/Sign-out log so we know who is in the building at all times.

**Cell Phone:** For safety of all children and families, please do not use your cell phone in the Preschool parking lot. If you take a phone call when walking to the Preschool Main Entrance, end the call before entering the building.

**Car Seats:** Children should **arrive and depart the church and Preschool Property in a car seat**, this includes siblings of students. The Preschool does not have extra car seats.

**The Preschool Entrance circle is a *FIRE LANE*; vehicles may not be left unattended**

Age of Pick-up Care Providers allowed to sign-out a child: 18 yrs. and older.

### **WEATHER ALERTS/CLOSING INFORMATION**

We observe Henderson County School System inclement weather policy for closing school. **Inclement** refers to severe or harsh **weather** that is cold or wet i.e. flooding, ice, snow, etc.

A 1-hour delay in the opening of H.C.P.S. due to weather will result in the Preschool opening 1-hour late, at 9:30AM and closing at our normal time of 11:30.

A 2 or 3 hour delay in the opening of H.C.P.S. due to weather will result in the Preschool opening at 10:00 A.M. and closing at 12:00 P.M.

Please listen to our local radio station, WHKP 1450AM, or watch WLOS Channel 13 for announcements of H.C.P.S. closings. .

**EARLYBIRDS WILL NOT BE HELD ON DELAY DAYS.**

## IMPORTANT SAFETY PROCEDURES

### Outside the Building:

- Do not leave children/siblings alone anywhere on the Preschool/Church property. It is against the State of North Carolina law for children to be left unattended in a car.
- Please do not allow your children to play/climb on the Preschool Circle retaining wall and the stairs by the parking lot. There is not a "Fall Zone" next to this wall and the stairs are extremely dangerous.
- Please supervise your child in the parking lot woods and behind the Weeping Cherry Tree. It is not a play safe area and poison ivy grows there.

### Inside the Building:

- Please hold your child's hand in the hallways and ensure they are beside you at all times while in the Preschool building.
- Staff does not allow children to run in the Preschool hallways. This is a safety rule that children follow during the school day. In order for you to be consistent with Preschool safety rules, if they run away from you, please ask them to return to you and walk.
- Children must finish their food before entering the building. According to North Carolina Childcare guidelines, children must eat with their friends at sanitized tables during designated snack and lunch time.

### Preschool Door Protocol:

The Preschool Doors are only open during specific times and can only be opened by an Earlybird fob and Preschool Office staff.

Door opening hours are:

Earlybird Fob: 8:00-8:25

Front Doors: 8:30-8:45

Regular Dismissal: 11:30-11:45

Aftercare Dismissal: 1:20-1:30

**Please do not open any doors in the Preschool for people on the outside of the building without our knowledge. I know that it is the kind thing to do and goes against our first instincts, but please follow our safety protocols.**

## ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

### 8:30 Arrival:

Parents park their car in the main parking lot and escort their children into the Preschool using the Main security doors at the Preschool entrance located in the Preschool Circle. Please remain with your child until the Preschool opens at 8:30 and take them to their classroom. You may wait in the foyer inside or outside by the main doors or in the Preschool Circle. We request that, to foster self-confidence, you **allow your child to walk** into the building holding your hand. Encourage independence by allowing them to carry their backpack and snack/lunch. They can also lead you to their classroom.

All caregivers must **sign-in** their child on the classroom clipboard. This is very important in order to know who is in the building at all times in case of emergency.

Our Preschool believes that timeliness is a very important skill for children to learn and must be taught by parents. It is also very important because learning starts at our school at 8:30 whether it is working one-on-one with teachers, table-work, or learning how to share while playing with friends at centers. Children learn timeliness very early and will model their parent's emphasis on it throughout their life. This is an essential life skill that will affect them their whole life-in their job, meeting homework deadlines, meeting work and school project deadlines, being ready for school in the morning when they start Kindergarten and elementary school, etc. This skill starts from your example. Please organize your morning so that you arrive to school on time.

For those parents who will be leaving their child for the first time, we have found the following to be helpful:

-- Some children experience separation anxiety during the first few weeks. We have found that a short and sweet goodbye routine each day helps your child transition quicker. We ask that you stay on the outside of the gate/door and not enter the classroom. If you enter the room, it creates more anxiety for your child and they will expect you to stay. Allow us the chance to settle your child in and make them feel comfortable. Be assured that your child is safe and secure in capable and professional hands and we will contact you if there are any problems. We have found that if you are not visible to them that it is easier to distract and calm them quicker. If you feel like you need to wait, please do so at the Preschool entrance. We will contact you if your child cannot be engaged in activities or calmed down. We look forward to building a trusting and loving relationship with your child and family.

### **EARLYBIRDS**

Earlybirds is available in the Large Activity Room from 8:00-8:25 AM for children on a **drop-in basis, there is no sign-up sheet**. Your child will be escorted to their classroom at 8:25 AM. The charge is \$1.00 per day.

#### **Earlybirds:**

**Fobs:** If you need a fob, please bring \$10 in cash for your fob deposit to the Preschool Office. We will return the \$10 deposit to you when you turn-in your fob.

**Earlybird Payment:** Please pay for the maximum amount of days you expect to use for the month. Any credit balances will carry forward.

**EARLYBIRDS WILL NOT BE HELD ON DELAY DAYS.**

### **DEPARTURE PROCEDURES**

**Early Departures:** No walk-in departures unless before 11:00 and arranged with staff. You must park in the main parking lot and come to the main Preschool Entrance.

#### **Early Walker Room Departure:**

Walker children get distressed when one of their Walker friends goes home early from Preschool. When they see one of their friend's parents, they begin to cry. Please wait in the foyer and we bring your child to you.

**\*11:30 Dismissal:**

The Preschool Main entrance doors open at 11:30.

All caregivers must **come into the building and sign-out** their child. Please help us to make dismissal an efficient process so that the hallways are clear.

**Aftercare Dismissal:** The Preschool Main entrance doors open at 1:20.

**\*Permission for Pick-up:\***

\*The Preschool will not allow a child to leave the Preschool without their parent or guardian's permission. If they are to be picked-up by another adult other than their parent or guardian, a permission form must be on file in the Preschool office on or before that day. Staff check the dismissal list to verify that the person picking up the child has permission to do so. All authorization for pick-ups must be in writing. Please use the Transportation Permission Form and leave it in the Preschool Mailbox located by the Preschool entrance. We suggest you write as many names as possible on this form in case you are unavailable to pick-up your child.

**A photo ID must be presented to staff when an adult is unfamiliar.**

**LATE FEE PICK-UP POLICY FOR ALL PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS**

**Preschool Late Pick-up Policy applies:**

**Daily dismissal:** Dismissal is 11:30, **late after 11:45**

**Aftercare:** Dismissal is 1:20, **late after 1:30**

**Summer Camp:** Dismissal is 12:50, **late after 1:00**

**2 hr. delay days:** Dismissal is 12:00, **late after 12:15**

**Late Fee Policy:** A charge of \$5 per child per 5-minute interval after time indicated above. For multiple children, siblings, and friends, the late fee will apply to each child and to the family responsible for picking up must pay for all children. Please pay at pick-up by cash or check payable to "Grace Lutheran Preschool" or put payment in the Preschool mailbox the next day your child attends.

**Problems getting to Preschool for pick-up?** If you are having a problem getting to school on-time to pick-up your child at dismissal, please call the Preschool office phone (693-4972) and leave a message as to the time when your child will be picked-up. All staff are busy dismissing children from 11:30-11:45 and are not in the office. If you have not come for your child by the end of dismissal, we will check the office phone for your message. The Late-Fee policy will apply. We can't be responsible for miscommunication between families and caregivers.

**CARPOOLS**

Please inform us IN WRITING of your child's carpool arrangements. Make sure that all people authorized to pick up your child are listed on your registration paperwork with current contact information. If there are any changes, please let us know immediately.

On the day that someone other than yourself is picking up your child, the Transportation Permission Slip must be filled out. These are located next to the Preschool office door and are in your Open House packet. If you have a caregiver that picks up your child on an ongoing basis, please mark "continuous" on the form so that we know that that person can pick-up your child any day. WE WILL REQUEST A PHOTO I.D. FOR ANY PERSON WE DO NOT KNOW. Please tell your child's caregiver that they must show their I.D. and that the child will not be released to them until the I.D. is verified.

## **HEALTH/ IMMUNIZATIONS/ACCIDENTS/SAFETY**

### **School health:**

The major goal of our school health program is to protect and promote the health of children within the Preschool environment. School health records provide a confidential record of each child's health status. The information that we gather about your child's health status enables us to identify children with special health care needs and to develop a health care plan that anticipates possible emergency situations.

The following information needs to be submitted for all students immediately upon registration:

◆ Current Immunization Record: This form is a part of registration. Updated copies should be turned into the Preschool Office. The N.C. Health Department requires that all children have certain standard immunizations: Polio, DPT, MMR, and Tetanus. Check with your provider to make sure your child is up-to-date.

The following information needs to be submitted for all students within 30 days of enrollment:

◆ Medical Exam form available on the website, [www.gracehendersonville.com](http://www.gracehendersonville.com), or in the Preschool office.

Usually, if there has been a recent exam, the childcare provider will fill out the form without an additional exam or expense. Check with your provider. The Medical Exam Form must be signed in order for it to be valid.

### **Illness:**

Illness, although unfortunate, is almost inevitable. We follow the "**24 hour**" Rule; if your child has had a fever of 100 degrees in the last 24-hours, (A fever is when a **child's temperature** is at or above one of these levels: measured orally (in the mouth): 100°F (37.8°C) measured rectally (in the bottom): 100.4°F (38°C) measured in an axillary position (under the arm): 99°F (37.2°C)) has heavy nasal discharge, cough, irritability or signs of any communicable disease, please keep your child at home. If a child is observed by our staff to be ill or begins to experience any of these symptoms during the day, you will be contacted to pick-up your child. If you are called to pick-up your child, you or a designated contact on the Emergency Contact List, are expected to pick-up your child within 20 minutes. It is your responsibility to notify the school of any change in contact information.

**Your child must be symptom-free for 24 hours to return to Preschool.**

For example: Fever on Tuesday at 4:00 in the afternoon= allowed to return to Preschool Thursday, if they have been fever free.

**You may need to update your Emergency Contact and Dismissal List. Transportation forms are located on the bookcase located outside the office.**

***PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN THE EVENT THAT YOUR CHILD CONTRACTS ANY COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.***

**Illness guidelines:**

Children will be expected to participate in all school activities unless excused in writing by their provider. Both quiet and busy activities will be planned each day.

With this in mind, here are some guidelines that might be helpful in keeping your child as healthy as possible. As you know, preschoolers do not have the same kinds of self-care skills for a cold or infection as school-age children. Also, young children can be in very close contact with each other while they play. This information will assist you in making decisions about when to send your child to school if they are not feeling well.

◆ **A Fresh Cold** - Continuous nasal discharge, cough, watery eyes which has developed within the past 24-48 hours is considered contagious.

◆ **Fever** - Must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school

◆ **Vomiting/Diarrhea** - Keep at home for 24 hours after symptoms have resolved and the child can keep food and fluids down

◆ **Strep Throat** - Must wait 24 hours after antibiotics have begun

◆ **Conjunctivitis (Pink-Eye)** - If conjunctivitis is diagnosed, your child will be prescribed eye ointment and should not return to school for 24 hours

In addition, if your child is only mildly ill but is irritable and cannot fully participate in the day's program, they should remain at home.

We can't prevent all illness, but if we work together we can minimize the spread of germs. It is very important to keep the Preschool office aware and up to date on any medical conditions. Please call the Preschool office if you have any questions.

Our custodians are trained in management and cleaning of schools and use best practice cleaning techniques. Our Preschool staff employs expected standards of hand washing and cleaning classrooms throughout the day.

I really need your help to follow the 24 hour rule at home.

**ACCIDENTS**

In the event of an accident, the school will give only simple first aid treatment. The permission form signed by you at the beginning of the year will take effect and be followed step-by-step. For non-emergencies, an Incident Report will be completed by staff and given to you for a signature at dismissal. In case of extreme emergency, the staff will first call the parents, then emergency names and arrange for ambulance transportation to Pardee Hospital. Caregivers will be asked to meet the child and one staff member at the hospital. It is your responsibility to notify the Preschool office if any of your contact information changes any time during the school year.



## **MEDICATION POLICY**

If your child needs medication while at school, a Medication Authorization form must be completed and signed by a parent. You will be asked to describe your child's condition and provide specific guidelines and permission for medication administration.

All medications must be stored in the Preschool office or classroom, not in backpacks. Children are very curious and may find medications in their backpacks or their friends' and inadvertently ingest them. If there is anything your health care provider is monitoring or requires follow-up, please inform the Preschool office.

## **TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

Grace Lutheran Preschool is a tobacco-free child care facility. Our policy prohibits the use of tobacco products, everywhere on campus, by everyone, at all times.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, Grace Lutheran Preschool uses loving guidance to mold productive behaviors that create positive interactions. A discipline policy and behavior management form is signed by parents and is part of their registration packet which is kept in their child's Preschool folder.

The Director may dismiss a child from Grace Preschool for sufficient cause. Grace Lutheran Preschool has the right to dismiss a child immediately from the program for the following reasons:

Inappropriate, uncontrolled and repeated misconduct on the part of the child that puts other children and staff at risk for injury (hitting, kicking, scratching, biting, etc.)

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The goal of discipline is to assist and guide the children in the development of self-control. Teachers will discipline in a consistent way, based on an understanding of varying developmental levels. Simple and understandable rules will be established so that expectations and limitations will be clearly defined. Discipline will be constructive in nature, including such methods as diversion, separating the child from the situation, encouragement and reinforcements for appropriate behavior and effort. A Discipline and Behavior Management Policy is available online for you to read.

## **BITING POLICY**

We are aware that biting is a behavior that sometimes occurs with infants and toddlers. Our staff is trained in the development of children with regard to biting. They are aware of the factors in group care that make biting more likely to occur. Providing a well-arranged environment that offers choices and activities that are age appropriate and engaging lessens these factors. If a child bites another child, the incident will be

documented on an incident report and signed by the parents. The parents of the child who has done the biting will also be informed of the incident. There are some children who are more prone to be biters.

If biting becomes a problem with a child; the staff will start tracking their behavior. The Director, along with the teachers and the parents, will come up with a plan of action designed to lessen the chances of a recurrence. Only after all possible preventive actions have been taken, we will ask that a child be removed from the Preschool for a period of five school days after the incident to help break the "biting" cycle. The school has a behavior policy in place that covers different issues. Information about biting behaviors is available from the Director.

### **POTTY TRAINING**

Potty training can be a fun and interesting time for your child and family. We suggest you wait until your child is ready and willing to recognize the signs themselves that they need to use the bathroom. Following this suggestion, there will be less frustration and anxiety and more positive training for everyone involved.

It is the policy of the Preschool that the children in the 3 yr.-old classes be potty-trained or working towards the end of potty training. Please request the Potty Training policy for your reference.

Your potty training child is moving into a new phase of independence and learning.

The potty training skill is best accomplished with the cooperation of parents, all childcare providers, and teachers working as a team. Children learn toileting skills through consistent positive encouragement from adults at home and at the Preschool. We will support you in any way we can and keep you informed of progress at school and request that you keep us informed about progress at home.

The Director and staff are available as a resource to answer any questions about your child's toilet training progress. We want to work as a team with you to make this process less frustrating and more positive for you and your child. Please be flexible and work with your child's teacher so we can determine what is necessary to train your child. Every child is different which may require different techniques to accomplish our goal.

We will work with your child by reminding them to use the potty on a regular basis. Part of our schedule is bathroom time and everyone participates. When children see others using the toilet, they want to be like their peers. It also helps them understand that using the bathroom independently is part of the classroom routine.

Since your child is progressing with their potty-training skills, for their first month, please supply an adequate amount of wipes, pull-ups, and socks, and extra clothes in your child's backpack.

Children will have an occasional accident at Preschool. We will need to call you if accidents become routine and you may be asked to keep your child at home until toilet training has been accomplished.

The following will help speed-up your child's potty training:

- At Grace Preschool, children are expected to wipe themselves. After using the toilet, your child will wipe themselves but will help your child if you or your child requests it. Please teach this skill at home and our staff will reinforce it at Preschool.

- If your child has an accident in their pull-up, we will help them change their pull-up. It is developmentally appropriate for your child to learn to change their own clothes if they have an accident. This teaches your child self-managing skills and independence.
- Please teach your child proper hand washing skills after they use the potty.
- Since it can be difficult pulling up and down pants, please have your child wear **elastic waist pants without buttons, belts, zippers, or snaps**. Your child will feel enthusiastic about potty training and develop self-esteem from managing their pants on their own.

There are a few basics techniques that will help your child be successful:

### **Boy's Potty Skills:**

- 1) For constancy and sanitary reasons, our Preschool boys learn the "Point and Shoot" method at Grace Preschool. To help teach this method at Preschool, we have installed stickers in the toilet bowls.

**Walkers and 2's:** We ask the boys to sit on the toilet and push their penis back towards the sticker and pee toward the sticker.

**3's:** In our years teaching boys how to pee into a toilet, we have found that some of the boys do not know that they need to hold their penis in their hand and point it at the bowl. They will stand in front of the toilet, pull down their pants, but don't know the "Point and Shoot" method. Some boys have also learned the "Sitting Backwards on the Toilet Seat Straddle".

At home, please regularly practice the "Point and Shoot" method. One method that helps speed-up learning is to put cheerios, fruit loops, or objects in the bowl and let them have fun trying to shoot it while they are urinating.

- 2) Boys learn to potty-train faster when they can model their older brothers or dads. Please work with them at home.

### **Girl's Potty Skills:**

- Girls need to learn to sit back on the potty to make sure their pee makes it in the bowl. We have found that this skill is learned quicker girls wear dresses or skirts.

We ask that you really practice these techniques with your child at home.

## **SNACKS/LUNCHES**

Grace Preschool provides nourishment twice a day. **All food is provided by parents and packed in a Bento Box style container with the child's name and current date. This is for all-age students.**

Snacks are picked-up from the classroom after arrival, stored on a rolling cart in the church's walk-in refrigerator and delivered to the classroom on a schedule based on the child's classroom age. After snack, the remainder of the child's snack is placed in their backpack or in a lunch container for Aftercare and then

stored in the Preschool Kitchenette refrigerator. Lunch is provided at a scheduled time based on the child's age.

Nutrition is very important to Grace Preschool because we believe that nutrition is one of the most important factors for a child's mental and physical health. "Among the factors that influence early brain development, three stand-out as having particularly profound effects: reduction of toxic stress and inflammation, presence of strong social support and secure attachment, and provision optimal nutrition<sup>3</sup>. (The Role of Nutrition in Brain Development: The Golden Opportunity of the "First 1000 Days" by Sarah E. Cusick, PhD and Michael K. Georgieff, MD, US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health. Additionally, according to Sean Patrick Corcoran, New York University Professor of Economics and Education Policy, studies have shown that healthy food does help children learn more efficiently. "Students who eat regular, healthy meals are less likely to be tired, are more attentive in class, and retain more information."

Children learn as early as Preschool what foods are healthy for their bodies. Grace Preschool is committed to teaching and fostering life-long healthy eating habits; therefore the following "Non-Growing foods" will not be served to your child while at preschool: All candy, cookies, marshmallows, sweet, sugary, gooey snacks, soda, and gum. If the staff determines that your child does not have enough snack or lunch when the above items are not served, food will be provided by the Preschool.

**Good choices include a variety of these "Growing Foods":**

**Fruit & vegetables:** Any cut-up fruit or vegetable, applesauce, and small pre-packaged containers are a good option. To avoid choking, grapes and olives must be cut up the long way or diced.

**Protein:** Yogurt, crackers and cheese (cubes, sticks, or slices, no grated please), any kind of sandwiches such as PB&J, cheese and ham, tuna, etc.

**Carbs:** Granola or fruit bars, pretzels, flat breads/bagels with cream cheese and jelly

**For the safety of all children please do not send in the following food items:**

Popcorn, nuts (peanuts, almonds, etc.) and whole hot dogs, whole grapes or whole cherry tomatoes (these must be cut up in small bite-size pieces). These are great food items in a home setting, and you may feel they are perfectly safe, but in the fun-filled atmosphere of school, choking can become a real hazard. Also, please do not send in food that needs to be prepared by the teacher or items that need to be heated. We do not have the ability to warm items.

**Healthy snack ideas:**

**Fruits**

Apple, Pear or Banana slices  
Melons & Cantaloupe (cubed or use a melon baller for fun shapes)  
Orange (wedges)  
Berries (strawberries, blackberries, blueberries)  
Grapes (cut in half or quarters the long way)  
Plums, peaches & nectarines (pitted & cut in half or pieces)  
Applesauce  
Individual pre-packaged containers of fruit or applesauce  
Olives (pitted, cut in half/quarters the long way)

**Proteins**

Hard Boiled Eggs  
Cream Cheese & Jelly mini sandwiches

**Veggies**

Corn on the cob (1/4 cob)  
Peas  
Green beans  
Sugar Snap Peas  
Sliced cucumbers  
Broccoli  
Carrots  
Raisins

**Carbs**

Granola or Fruit Bars  
Flat Breads/Bagels w/ cream cheese & jelly

Yogurt-no Go-Gurt please  
Raisin Bread w/PB or cream cheese  
Cheese Sticks or Cube  
Quesadilla w/melted cheese or cream cheese  
Sandwiches – PB&J, Turkey, Ham & Cheese, Egg Salad  
Cut ham, turkey or bologna  
Yogurt pretzels or raisins  
Goldfish

Pretzel Sticks  
Animal Crackers & Cinnamon  
Graham Crackers  
Muffins/mini muffins  
Veggie Chips  
Mini Rice Cakes  
Chex Mix

Independence is an important skill that we like to foster in all our children; it creates self-esteem and the chance to discover new abilities. The following are some ideas that help support independence in regards to snack and lunches.

**Snack storage containers:** At snack, children unpack and pack-up their own food except in the Walker class. They love this! It allows them to be independent and resourceful. All containers need to be child-friendly so their little fingers can open and close containers. Please keep accessibility in mind when packing their snack. Ask yourself, “Can my child open this container top or bag?” It is recommended that your child practice at home and pick out the containers at the store that they can manage.

**Problem food packaging:**

**Stick cheese-** Please open the cheese wrapping a little bit so that your child can pull apart the plastic by themselves.

**Squeeze packaged items-** No Gogurt, fruit, drink. Food pouches for the Walker class are OK. These items usually end up more on the child than in their mouth and they get frustrated. Instead, please send in a container of yogurt or applesauce that your child can spoon out. Using a spoon is a very important milestone and we want to encourage them to learn this skill.

**Drink:** Please provide **water, not juice**, in a spill-proof container that can be handled easily by your child. Containers are refilled with water when they become empty. **Please send water only in non-commercial water bottles.** Commercial water bottles are difficult for little children to manage, have lids that create choking hazards, create spills, and cannot be refilled.

## **BIRTHDAYS/HOLIDAYS**

**Birthdays:**

As a Preschool, we are seeing more and more children with food allergies and dietary restrictions. **As a result of this, we do not celebrate individual student birthdays with food.**

**Non-food items can be given to the students. These include** special stickers, temporary tattoos, stampers, and bubbles. Please do not send-in items that could be choke hazards to students and their small siblings at home.

**Holidays:**

Out of respect for our children and families, we do not celebrate all holidays. If a class will be creating food projects for a holiday or a celebration, a food sign-up list will be posted. Children’s allergies and good nutrition will be taken into account when determining healthy ingredients. Our Preschool will not serve food

unless we have prepared it in class or you have sent it for snack/lunch for your child. **This policy is to protect and respect all children's allergies, dietary restrictions, and family preferences.**

**Valentine's Day, Halloween, Christmas:**

If you would like to share the above holidays, **please do not send in any food** such as candy, sweets or gum with your Valentine cards or treat bags. Many of our students have dietary restrictions for various reasons and we would hate to have a student have an allergic reaction or have to be denied the treat when they get home. **Non-food items may be given to the students such as** special stickers, temporary tattoos, stampers, bubbles, etc. Please do not send-in items that could be choke hazards to students and their small siblings at home. Please provide one for each student in the class.

**WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL**

**BACKPACK/BENTO BOX STYLE CONTAINER FOR SNACKS AND LUNCHES**

Items required for school on a daily basis are backpack and a Bento Box style container for snack and lunch. (Per State of NC safety rules, we may not have bags in the Walkers and 2's Preschool classrooms.) Please send your child's snack and lunch in a Bento-style lunch box that doesn't leak. All age children need to supply a change of clothes in a gallon-size bag (3's and Pre-K bag only only) with your child's name written on the outside of the bag or inside on the label (for Walkers and 2's).

**Please write the name of your child and date written daily on the Bento Box container.** Snacks and lunches will be kept in the church commercial kitchen, no cool packs needed. Please write this at home ahead of time.

Please pack a hearty amount of food in the bag and if your child is staying for Aftercare, please send extra food in the one bag.

The requested size of backpack at our Preschool is for **all ages Walkers through Pre-K** is:

**Length: 16 inches long      Width: 12 inches wide**

**For everyone's safety: No wheeled backpacks, please.**

This size backpack is adequate for their entire time in Preschool and can hold many items such as jackets and coats, papers and folders, art projects and lunchboxes. Please check your child's backpack daily.

**Children not Potty-Trained:**

Please supply all of these items to be left at school. All items need to be labeled with your child's name:

- wipes, diapers, and a change of clothes. Labeling helps to ensure your child gets their own items.
  
- **Aftercare 2's**, please keep two extra labeled diapers in your child's backpack for easy changing in the **Walker Aftercare room.**

## CLOTHING

Simplicity is the key to a comfortable child. Children's clothes should be washable and very comfortable. Play clothes that are easily handled by the children themselves are recommended for daily wear. Every child should wear clothing that they can pull up and down by themselves. **We encourage self-sufficiency for bathroom use, so belts, overalls, and extra buttons are discouraged.**

Shoes must be worn at all times. Supportive closed-toed shoes are the best choice for preschool. CROCS, sandals, flip flops and cowboy boots are safety hazards and not conducive for play in a preschool environment. Please make sure your child's shoe are the appropriate size, not easily removed by your child, and don't fall off during play.

PLEASE label all items including hats, gloves, boots, coats, sweaters, backpacks, lunchboxes, and drink cups. We cannot be responsible for unmarked items.

Children play outside every day except on extremely cold and wet days. Please make sure your child is dressed for cold weather play.

## CHILDREN'S PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, books, or personal items into the Preschool, unless your child's teacher requests them. Toys and stuffed animals should remain in the car seat or at home.

Personal items from home are very distracting because children want to get toys out of their backpacks to play with them in the classroom.

Also, please have your child leave ball caps in your car. We do not allow children to wear hats at school because of our Lice policy.

## SAFETY/SECURITY

Safety is the number one priority at Grace Preschool. All entrance/exit doors are locked at all times. Visitors and parents must enter and exit through the main Preschool doors located at the Preschool entrance in the Preschool Circle. There are call boxes located at the entrance in the front and back of the Preschool. The Director and Administrative Assistant are the designated staff to open these doors during Preschool hours.

Grace Preschool has an Emergency Medical Care Plan and follows an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPR) which is updated on a yearly basis. All staff is trained on the EPR Plan and a Fire Drill is conducted each month at unexpected times and under varying conditions. A Shelter-in-Place or Lockdown Drill is conducted every three months. Records of drills are kept by the Preschool Office.

Grace Preschool follows all North Carolina State Fire, Sanitation, and Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) policies and procedures. Inspections are completed by these entities on an annual and bi-annual basis.

**Safety Precautions on Church Grounds:** To optimize the safety of your child and other children, please watch your child and all children at arrival and dismissal.

- Please do not allow your children to play/climb on the Preschool Circle retaining wall, trees in Preschool Circle, and Preschool sign by the Earlybird door, and the stairs by the Church/Preschool parking lot and the church parking lot and grounds. These areas carry potential dangers because there is not a “Fall Zone” of mulch to protect the children, just concrete. Children will really hurt themselves if they fall onto the concrete from the sign, stairs, walls, and railings.
- Please supervise your child in the Preschool driveway, parking lot, parking lot woods, and behind the Weeping Cherry Tree. These areas are not play safe areas.
- Please do not leave children/siblings alone anywhere on the Preschool/Church property. It is against the State of North Carolina law for children to be left unattended in a car.
- The main church parking lot is the only designated area for school parking.

### **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

A national and state criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position).

The background check authorization form and qualifying letter is maintained in confidence on file at Grace Lutheran Preschool. An employee must have a satisfactory Criminal Background Check result to work at the Preschool

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Grace Lutheran Preschool seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Grace Lutheran Preschool from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff from false accusations.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Child or Children: For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Selection of Employees and Volunteers: All employees and all persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened before they are hired or scheduled to work with children.

Employees: All persons hired by Grace Lutheran Church are subject to Personnel Policy, which includes a national and state criminal background check and drug screening prior to hiring.

Child Abuse: Any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development.

Neglect: Depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.



## **VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION PROCESS**

### **Volunteer Orientation:**

Prior to participating in a program, a personal conversation may be conducted by the Director to review specifics of their role and to review the **Child Protection Policy**.

Grace Lutheran Preschool will provide training to all new childcare workers both staff and volunteers. Grace Lutheran Preschool will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events whenever they are available.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Two Adult Rule:**

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult staff and volunteers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our Preschool program and activities. Occasionally, a staff member will need to be alone with a child. In these instances, the Open Door Rule will be followed.

### **Open Door Policy:**

All classroom doors are equipped with side windows. Doors should remain open at all times unless there good reason for them to be closed for a short lengths. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

### **Equipment Safety:**

Nursery equipment, playground equipment, toys, and other equipment used by children are inspected monthly by playground safety trained Preschool staff and the Preschool Director using the Playground Inspection Checklist.

### **Teenage Worker Policy:**

There may be times when the Preschool has a volunteer intern assisting in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to such workers:

- Teenage workers must be at least 13 years of age.
- Teenage workers must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

### **Grace Lutheran Preschool Door Security:**

Previously established and published procedures will be followed. The Director of the Preschool shall be responsible for communicating, instructing, and overseeing these procedure at all Preschool activities.

Only staff fobs and keys can access the Preschool area when locked. Key system records user ID. Access for others during school hours shall be the decision of the Preschool Director or designee.

### **Sick Child Policy:**

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Grace Lutheran Preschool. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be brought for activities:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

#### **Medication Policy:**

Grace Lutheran Preschool will not administer prescription or over the counter medications children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted by parents of children for **emergency purposes by using administration and authorization forms** located in the Preschool office or on the Preschool website. **The Preschool Director should be notified by parents about any potentially life-threatening conditions such as asthma or severe allergic reactions. Parents of such children should address their situation with the Preschool Director prior to the child's first day of Preschool to develop a plan of action.**

#### **Discipline Policy:**

It is the policy of Grace Lutheran Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

#### **Restroom Guidelines:**

Children five years of age and younger should utilize a classroom bathroom, if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.

Staff should never be alone with a child in a bathroom or stall with the door closed.

#### **Accidental Injuries to Children:**

In the event that a child is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care. First Aid kits provided and maintained by the Wellness Ministry are available at numerous locations in the facility.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.

3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

### **Responding to Incidents of Child Abuse:**

Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect:**

Preschool staff may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Grace Lutheran Preschool becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under their care, this should be reported immediately to the Preschool Director for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Grace Lutheran Preschool, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified unless they are the suspected abuser.
  2. The staff member alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation.
  3. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report.
  4. We will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Currently, state law mandates reporting by anyone who suspects abuse or neglect of a minor. See attached NC statutes from [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
  5. We will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be appointed by the Congregation Council Executive Committee (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sr. Pastor) to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
1. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position with children.
  2. Senior Pastor will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved in which case the spokesperson will be the Council President. All other staff and volunteers will refrain from speaking to the media.

3. A visit by a pastor at Grace will be arranged for those who desire it.

## **PARENT INPUT**

The Preschool staff recognizes the important role of parents in the learning process. We welcome and encourage you to take an active role in your child's program. We also hope that you will enjoy new friendships with other families as a result of your child's experience. All-School Picnic Potlucks, Friday "Lunch and Play", and Outreach socials, and play dates with other children outside of school are wonderful opportunities to meet and enjoy the Preschool families. A Preschool Directory is published every October to encourage out of Preschool family social activities.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parents are ALWAYS welcome to participate in the school program in a number of ways.

These include:

- Touring the Preschool before your child attends. Parents, Grandparents, and Child Care providers are welcome to tour and see what your child will experience at school.
- Parents are encouraged to take the opportunity to meet with staff on a regular basis to discuss their child's needs and progress and for staff to exchange information about their class, child's progress and Preschool curriculum and program.
- Reading to your child's class (Grandparents and caregivers also) Please talk to the staff to make arrangements in advance.
- Special occasions when we will need parent volunteers to help with school projects.
- "In-House" Field Trips- Parents, Grandparents, and care providers are encouraged to share hobbies, collections, skills and talents with their child's class or the whole school. In the past, the children have had a French horn and guitar demonstration, had a surgeon talk about the hospital, learned how to make bread and pizza, had a dentist, policeman, pilot, carpenter, and scuba diver visit the class, and that's only to name a few!
- Families participate by providing supplies and food for special projects, and cutting and assembling curriculum at home.
- Little Free Library donations, and Book Swap
- Our Preschool has an Open Door policy in which parents can and should discuss their concerns about the teaching staff, child's classroom, and the Preschool with the Director. If at any time you have a concern about a teacher, a child in your child's class, another parent, or Preschool policies, please see the Director. Out of respect for all Grace Preschool children, parents, and staff, please do not discuss Preschool issues with other parents or in your child's presence.

Please let us know if you are willing to offer your time, talents or interests. We will always welcome your help and participation at our Preschool.

## VISITORS

For safety reasons, any non-school personnel – including parents – must report to the Preschool office upon arrival at the school. If you have a scheduled appointment with a staff member or are volunteering in the school, you are required to Sign-In and Sign-Out. Items that need to be given to your child during the school day are to be left at the Preschool office, so that it can be delivered to the child. This policy is meant to keep disruptions to children’s learning to a minimum as well as for safety.

## GUIDELINES/CONFIDENTIALITY FOR VOLUNTEERS AND SUBSTITUTES

### **Objectives of being a volunteer:**

- To enhance the learning experience of the children
- Create an optimal learning environment for all the children
- Provide more one-to-one teaching to help reinforce and improve learning

You are welcome and encouraged to volunteer at our Preschool. Children love to have their family read to their class or help out with school activities. Please talk to the staff to make arrangements in advance.

If you chose to volunteer at our Preschool or your child’s classroom, you will work with children who have a wide variety of personalities and developmental levels. Children are learning appropriate social skills at school, that’s why they are enrolled in preschool. As a volunteer, you will be obligated to keep all information about children and families confidential. Respecting people’s privacy is paramount and expected by any adult involved with children. This policy protects all children as well as their families.

If you are in your child’s classroom, your child may want a lot of your attention when you are there. Please tell your child before you volunteer that you will not be able to give them your undivided attention. Also, you may bring your child’s siblings with you when you volunteer, but you need to discuss this option with the Director.

Please let the teacher know if you see any disciplinary issues arise while you are volunteering. Since we have a continued rapport with all of the children, it is best for us to handle all disciplinary situations.

Please sign-in on the Volunteer Log located at the Preschool office when you arrive.

## PRESCHOOL CLEANING CHECKLIST

<b>DAILY</b>					
Trash in custodian's closet removed to dumpster					
Classrooms closed & locked					

<b>Hall Bathrooms - Daily</b>					
Sinks & mirrors (return counter items to places; <b>(Watch for mold &amp; soap residue around faucets and soap residue on counters)</b> )					
<b>Check &amp; re-stock toilet paper in each stall (Keep two rolls in stock)</b>					
<b>Check &amp; re-stock paper towel dispenser and basket in Ladies (Keep them full)</b>					
All trash cans emptied & liners replaced (keep extra liners in bottom of cans) <b>(Kitchen &amp; Art Room also)</b>					
Sweep floors					
<b>Turn off all Preschool lights</b>					
Clean all toilets – inside & out					
<b>A box of paper towels &amp; toilet paper in Custodial Closet at all times. Staff expects supplies to be there.</b>					

<b>Classroom Bathrooms – Daily</b>					
Sinks & mirrors <b>(Watch for mold &amp; soap residue around faucets and soap residue on counters)</b>					
Replace with new rolls each day					
Check & completely refill paper towel dispenser					
Clean all toilets – inside & out (including the outside base)					
Sweep & Mop floor					
Empty trash & replace liner (keep extra liners in bottom of cans)					
<b>Turn off lights in Bathroom</b>					
All Bathrooms mop floors					

<b>Floors – Daily</b>					
Vacuum area rugs in classrooms					
Sweep & mop classroom floors					
Sweep & mop hallway, including art room & kitchenette					
Sweep away leaves or debris outside at each PS entrance					

<b>WEEKLY</b>					
Clean windows at main PS entrance (inside & out)					
Clean windows at east PS entrance (inside & out)					
Vacuum & mop elevator					
Clean stainless steel of elevator					
Sweep exterior steps to playground					
Vacuum steps going to church lobby					

<b>AS NEEDED or REQUESTED</b>					
Blow leaves away outside entrances & <b>Basketball Goal</b>					
Blow leaves away on each playground					
Replace or report light bulbs that are out					

Updated 09/03/19