

PRESCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dear Parents,

Christ Lutheran Preschool extends a warm welcome to all our parents and their children who will be entering our program. It is our hope that your preschool experience will be a happy and helpful one for you and your child. This booklet has been prepared to assist you in understanding our program. It will give you an idea of what to expect from our educational center and what the center expects from you. Please read our handbook carefully, because you will sign a form stating that you have received it, read it, and agree to follow the policies stated. Please save this handbook and refer to it whenever you have questions. It is our desire to maintain open communication with the parents of our preschool community. Please feel free to see the director whenever you wish to discuss your child's progress or any other concerns you may have.

In Christ,

Christ Lutheran Preschool Director

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A child's first school experience should be one that develops a sense of joy, wonder and curiosity about the world around us. It is the purpose of Christ Lutheran Preschool to offer a loving, accepting Christian environment in which young children can develop to their fullest potential; spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, creatively, and intellectually.

We believe that children need to know that God loves them and is their friend. We will provide a Christian atmosphere through Bible stories, prayer, songs, praise, and our actions, thus enabling a child to grow in his/her relationship to God. Our intent is to act as an extension of the home, ministering to the family and working together with them to instruct in God's Word, promote Christian values, and in all ways help our children to develop into mature and responsible followers of Christ.

TYPE OF PRESCHOOL

The New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department licenses Christ Lutheran Preschool for children aged 2 to 5 years. Our Christian preschool is a nonprofit, church-sponsored organization. Christ Lutheran Preschool is sponsored by Christ Lutheran Church and is governed by the Board of Christian Education. A director gives overall immediate supervision and staffs the daily operation. All personnel have met requirements of the state and the director and teachers have received (or are working toward) certification in Early Childhood Education. The child/teacher ratio varies in each room, but it is within NM State regulations.

ADMISSION

Enrollment is open to all children aged two by September 1st of the year in which they will begin school. Parents must fill out an application for admission, an enrollment packet, and submit a registration fee in order to secure a spot in our program. The parents will be required to complete these forms online, and submit the registration fee, along with a current immunization record and birth certificate of the child. Each preschool child must have on file an enrollment application, admission agreement, a social and developmental history form, a current immunization record, an emergency card and release form. Student records are open only to authorized staff members of Christ Lutheran School, an authorized employee of the licensing agency, or the child's parent or legal guardian.

REGISTRATION

Registration is available online, through our website www.clsabq.com. New families must complete the Online Application, meet with the Principal, Preschool Director, and teacher, and then complete the Online Enrollment Packet. Registration is not complete until immunizations are uploaded or turned into the school, and the registration fee has been paid.

DAILY SCHEDULE/CURRICULUM

Our program is based on the philosophy that children learn more readily when given opportunities to experience first-hand the wonders of God's Word and His World. Children will develop at their own rate and their interests will vary as they develop. Learning is an active process in which a child interacts with his/her environment, making choices which enhance development. Teachers value each child's individuality by encouraging each child to progress at his/her own rate and we express our love for them wherever they are on their road of development. The daily schedule will be a balance of active and quiet, individual and group activities, both teacher- initiated and child- initiated.

Religious activities: Bible stories, simple Bible verses, songs, prayers, and activities.

Social experiences: Problem-solving, interacting in groups, making friends, communicating.

Science experiences: Nature walks, watching things grow, experiments, language activities, storytelling, discussion, poetry, finger-plays.

Language experiences: Storytelling, discussion, poetry, finger-playing.

Creative experiences: Painting, paperwork, play-dough, puppetry, finger-painting, scrap material, drama, singing and musical experiences.

Special studies: Seasons, holidays, home, church, community, manners.

Thinking skills: Counting, number concepts, number recognition, left- to- right sequencing.

Physical Growth: Large motor skills include jumping, running, catching/throwing, balancing. Small motor skills include using manipulatives, drawing, tracing, use of scissors and painting.

Emotional Growth: Becoming independent, developing self-esteem with experiences of success, developing self-control.

COMMUNICATION

Information is communicated to families through a weekly newsletter from the classroom as well as the school office. All ECE classrooms use an app called Class Dojo to help communicate with parents. It is important to read all information to ensure your child is getting the most from his or her preschool experience. Christ Lutheran Preschool encourages family involvement in the child's education, and it is therefore important that you read the information available so that your child will participate in these activities.

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

A home visit or open house will be scheduled prior to the beginning of the school year. During this short visit, your child will have the opportunity to interact with his

or her new teacher. Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in March to discuss your child's progress. Christ Lutheran Preschool encourages parent involvement in their child's education. If you have any areas of concern, please feel free to schedule a time to discuss this with your child's teacher. Please remember that pick up and drop off times are very busy, and your child's teacher will be concerned with the safety of the children and therefore may not be able to carry on a long conversation. Parents are encouraged to communicate often with the teacher.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION/CALENDAR

Half-day preschool is in session Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. Full-day preschool is in session Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. The regular preschool year is from the middle of August through the end of May. You will receive a calendar detailing all the school holidays.

ARRIVAL AND PICKUP

No child should be brought to school before 7:50 AM or picked up after 3:00 pm (12:00 pm for half-day preschool) unless he or she is checked into extended care. If a child is left beyond 12:00 pm half-day preschool with no arrangements made, he or she will be checked into extended care. Full-day preschoolers not picked up by 3:05 pm will be checked into extended care. A late pick-up charge of \$20 per 5 minutes will be assessed for any child picked up after 6:00 pm. You will find this policy in the Extended Care section of this book.

We ask that upon arriving at the school you walk your child to his/her classroom and do not leave until the teacher or aide has acknowledged his/her presence and given an okay on the health inspection. When picking up a child from school, the parent or guardian must notify the child's teacher. A child will not be released to any person whose name is not indicated on the child's records. A note from a parent/guardian will be needed if someone else is picking up your child. Each child will have to be signed in and out each day by someone authorized to do so. A sign in/out sheet for each child is provided in each classroom. Please be sure to fill in the time and the full signature of the adult.

No children will be allowed to play in the playground area before or after school. That area is reserved for use of the extended care program.

Arriving on time for the start of school is important to the child's education, the continuity of classroom operations, and the child's feeling of self-esteem. Parents/guardians should make every effort to have their child arrive at school on time.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential if a student is to take full advantage of the

educational opportunities the school provides. Regular attendance develops reliability, dependability and responsibility in the student and contributes to his or her academic and spiritual growth.

At no time during the daily session are students allowed to leave the school grounds, except by previous arrangement for unavoidable circumstances, and must be accompanied by a parent or a designated person. If at all possible, parents should schedule appointments outside of school hours. Only medical, dental, or therapy appointments may be necessary to schedule during the school day, and a note will need to be brought into the school office for your student's file.

Tardies: Arriving on time for the start of school is important to the child's education and the continuity of classroom operations. Students who are continuously tardy are a disruption to the classroom, which affects all student learning. Parents should make every effort to have their child arrive at school on time. Any child who is not in the classroom at 8:00 am is considered tardy.

* Three tardies are equal to one absence. Students are allowed 5 tardies per quarter. Parents will be charged a \$5 fee for each tardy after five. Tardies are either excused or unexcused. Excused is defined as resulting in the student having a doctor, dental, counseling, therapy, court appointment, in case of extreme weather, or car accident. Unexcused is everything else. The school principal has the final say in any special circumstances.

Absences: The student attendance policy allows a maximum of five (5) days absent per quarter. Three tardies are equal to one absence. A student who arrives after 9:30 a.m. or leaves before 12:30 p.m. will receive credit for a half-day's attendance. Teachers should be notified of appointments (doctor, dentist, court summons, speech therapy, etc.) A letter will notify the parent/guardian when a student has missed five (5) days of school in a quarter.

Students will receive excused absences if they bring in a note for any of the following: doctor, dental, counseling, therapy, court appointment, in case of extreme weather, or car accident. Unexcused is everything else. The school principal has the final say in any special circumstances.

Absences longer than one (1) day (other than those caused by illness) must be discussed in advance by the principal. You are strongly encouraged to plan vacations during the summer or scheduled school breaks, not when school is in session.

Procedure for Reporting Absence: It is essential that we closely monitor all children under our care; therefore, a parent/guardian is expected to call or send a message via Class Dojo, by email, or by phone to the school by 9:00 am if their child will be absent. The school will attempt to contact the home if the parent/guardian has not reported the absence.

Parking lot etiquette:

- Speed limit is 5 mph.
- Keep your eyes open for those using the crosswalks.
- Be mindful of stereo volume which can be a distraction to your awareness.
- Practice using the crosswalks at ALL times.
- Do not park over the marked crosswalk areas.
- Please remember that it is New Mexico State Law for all children to be in an appropriate car seat/booster seat for their age or to be wearing a seat belt.
- It is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that children under the age of 13 ride in the back seat.

We appreciate your dedication to safety!

NOTE: Because we are a secure campus it is imperative that teachers are able to focus on greeting students and take attendance in the morning; likewise, teachers are responsible for verifying who is picking up in the afternoon. If you have an urgent message for your child's/children's teacher, please message, text, email, or call them with the information or to set a time to meet to discuss.

The principal, teachers, and other staff are required to enforce this policy. When any staff member sees an unsupervised child(ren) they will be told to go with their parents. If parents are not available, the child(ren) will be checked into extended care. Parents who are on site may be asked to supervise their children more closely if necessary. Check with your child's teacher for specific procedures for that class.

FIELD TRIPS

For safety reasons, we do not take field trips in preschool, however, we do have many people visit our classroom, firemen, policeman, postal worker, etc. If you would like to arrange to visit and share an occupation or a talent, please let your child's teacher know.

SPECIAL DAYS

Preschool children will celebrate holidays with a special snack and activity. Parents are invited to attend some of these celebrations. A sign-up sheet to volunteer to bring cupcakes, napkins, juice, and other party items is made available.

FOOD

Your child should have a healthy breakfast before coming to preschool. We will have a mid-morning snack. Once a month your child will be asked to bring a snack for their class. The snack should include at least two food groups, juice or milk, cups, and napkins. A record of allergies is kept on file in the classroom.

LUNCH

Full-day preschool children will need to have lunch. Lunch is at approximately 11:19 each day. Hot lunch and milk are available and are delivered from a local company. You may order a hot lunch online through Rhubarb and Elliott. The preschool has a refrigerator and microwave available.

CLOTHING

We would like to encourage you to dress your child in everyday play clothes and shoes. We recommend washable clothing as it may get dirty and soiled. It is important that your child can feel free to experiment with different materials without fear of getting dirty. We do have paint shirts but once in a while, accidents happen. The dress is to be comfortable for indoors and outdoors. Sturdy, washable, self-help clothing is suggested. Too many layers or difficult fasteners make it hard for a child to be independent in his/her toileting and are conducive to accidents.

We do ask that you also dress your child according to the weather. We will go outside to play every day (weather permitting). Also, please mark all coats/gloves/hats etc. in permanent ink with your child's name. Please provide a change of clothing for your child including pants/shorts, underwear, a shirt, and socks.

SUPPLIES

Each child will be asked to provide school supplies. The supplies will be placed in a community area to be used by all students in the classroom. A supply list will be sent home before school begins.

DISCIPLINE

At Christ Lutheran Preschool, we view discipline as a process of teaching the child. This includes setting of consistent limits, and when necessary, enforcement of these limits. Since children have a variety of reasons for a particular action, we strive to understand the reason for misbehavior. We want to help them work together with others using Jesus as an example. We work to develop the child's ability to deal with his/her own problems as they arise. This includes:

- Encouraging children to "use their words" to work out a problem between two children.
- Clarifying consequences of misbehavior before the behavior occurs. For example: "If you throw sand, you will not be allowed to play in the sand."
- Using age-appropriate expectations for children. We do not expect children to understand and obey complex rules. Manipulating the environment and curriculum to avoid most institutional-caused misbehaviors.
- Redirecting a child who may be headed for misbehavior to another activity.

- Giving "time out" for some types of inappropriate behavior. A "time out" is a way of telling a child that his/her behavior is not acceptable. A "time out" takes the child away from friends and activity for a short time, giving him or her a chance to calm down and start over.
- Reinforcing desirable behavior by praising the child. When the child realizes that attention comes from appropriate behavior, that behavior is more likely to continue.

Corporal punishment or humiliating or frightening techniques are never used, nor is punishment ever associated with food, rest, physical exercise and isolation for illness or toilet training.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your child's health and safety are a matter of importance to all of us. All staff are informed of safety rules, special hazards and commonly occurring accidents. They have received detailed instruction on evacuation procedures, use of fire extinguishers and how to report an accident. All staff members have current first aid and CPR certificates. The children are always under direct adult supervision. Children are always escorted to and from the bathrooms. All poisonous substances are stored in a locked cupboard out of the reach of the children. Medications are not stored in the same cupboard as poisonous materials. No toys or equipment with easily removable small parts or suckers or hard candy are allowed. All sharp objects are stored out of reach of the children. The classroom equipment is observed continually for stability, smoothness of wooden objects and safe corners. The play yard is fenced, and no child is allowed outside to play unless there is a staff member present.

All electrical outlets are capped. The furnace room door is always closed, and that room is off limits except to staff. Only staff members use electrical appliances. Whenever cooking is done as a part of the curriculum, the children are cautioned and under the direct supervision of staff. Electrical appliances and matches are stored out of reach when not in use.

Whenever the children leave the building as a group, they are required to walk in an orderly fashion and are accompanied by staff and other adults if deemed necessary.

The preschool conforms to all fire regulations as designated by the State Fire Marshall. A fire evacuation plan is drawn and posted in the preschool room. The 911 emergency number and the exact address of the building are posted by the telephone. One monthly fire drill is held.

Should a child be missing from the premises, staff will search the building and grounds completely. If the child is not found, the police and parent/guardian will be notified while staff begins a search of the immediate surrounding area.

The State of New Mexico requires a signed record of all immunizations be on file for each child.

Health Inspection:

Every child should be inspected at home each morning before he/she associates with other children in school. The staff has the authority to refuse admittance to any child if he or she shows signs of illness. Your child may be sent home if he/she appears to have symptoms of illness during the day. In such cases, he/she is immediately isolated from the others and a parent is contacted and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible. Children must be free of the following symptoms for a full 24 hours before coming to school: fever, vomiting, runny nose with colored discharge, or diarrhea.

Communicable Disease:

Please notify the school at once if the child has a communicable disease so that others may be notified. All children absent from school because of a communicable disease will be readmitted only with a note from the doctor stating he/she is no longer contagious.

Medicine:

We prefer not to administer medicine to your child. If an exception is necessary, please check with the director so that proper arrangements can be made. All medications must be in original containers, labeled with the child's name and proper dosage. They will be locked in the medicine box during the day and administered by the child's teacher. All medications given will be documented.

Sick Child Procedure:

If a child becomes ill or injured during school or extended care parents will be contacted to pick up their child. If parents cannot be reached, other designated contacts on the child's emergency card will be called.

Emergency:

In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If necessary, we will call an ambulance or paramedics. The Director or Head Teacher will be in charge and make all decisions about the care of the child. Parents will be expected to assume responsibility for any resulting expenses not covered by our insurance. The school will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school up to date on changes of phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

Accident Reports:

An Accident Report will be completed for each accident except minor scratches and abrasions. The report shall be made as soon as possible following the accident and not later than the same day. The original report shall be filed at the school and a copy shall be given to the parents.

Emergency Preparedness Plan:

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of all students from the Christ Lutheran Church and School grounds the following procedures would be followed:

- Each teacher will obtain an accurate count of students in his/her care.
- Teachers will bring emergency forms for all the children in their class and any available cell phones.
- Teachers will have children line up and exit the buildings in an orderly fashion to the school parking lot.
- In the parking lot, teachers will conduct a second count of the children.
- The children will then be escorted to the Sandia High School cafeteria.
- The teachers will then begin to contact parents and other emergency contacts

on children's emergency cards.

- Teachers will stay with children until they have been released to a parent or other appropriate adult.

Please see the Emergency Preparedness Handbook for more information. You can obtain a copy from the school office.

Child Abuse:

In accordance with the NM law, the school staff is obligated under penalty of fine and jail term to report the **reasonable suspicion** of physical abuse, emotional deprivation, physical neglect, inadequate supervision, or sexual abuse and exploitation. The clear intent of the law is to mandate a report of **reasonable suspicion of abuse**. School staff will make such reports in the best interests of the affected child, and do not, once reasonable suspicion is established, have any legal alternative except to make the report to the proper authorities for their investigation and review. Any suspicion of abuse by staff at the preschool must be documented on the Documentation of Employment Problem form and reported immediately to the Director. The Director will confer with the staff members, and then report to the local family service agency if the Director determines that abuse is a possibility.

Procedure outlined by family services must be followed. The staff members will have the opportunity for defense.

General Cleanliness:

Children are encouraged and helped to keep themselves clean. Paper towels are provided for their use. Children are supervised in toileting and washing hands. They receive age- appropriate training in personal hygiene to include proper hand washing methods, time to wash hands, and proper toileting procedure.

Toileting:

Children must be able to go the bathroom, unfasten their clothes, and sit on the toilet, clean themselves, and pull their clothes back up, fasten and zip their pants, wash their hands, and dry them. We understand that accidents do happen, but if this is a regular occurrence, we may have to have a conference to discuss the situation. Please dress your child in clothes they can manage independently. **No Pull ups.**

SHARE TIME

Sharing objects from home with the class enables your child to develop his/her social skills, language, and self-esteem. Your child will be assigned a "Share Day." On that day, your child may bring an object from home to share with the class. We ask that your child not bring more than two items. Weekly "Share Day" themes are sent home. These themes correspond with our current curriculum. The purpose of the themed share is to encourage parents to participate in choosing appropriate

items. PLEASE DO NOT BRING GUM, CANDY, WAR TOYS, OR OTHER TOYS OF DESTRUCTION. Toys should not be brought from home except for a small item that may be stored in your child's cubby for short hugs during the day and for afternoon rest time.

BIRTHDAYS

To a young child, the day of his/her birthday is very important. Therefore, your child's birthday will be celebrated in the classroom. We will sing "Happy Birthday," give your child a crown, a special gift from preschool, and hugs from everyone. If you will be hosting a birthday party at your home or other place for your child and will be inviting children from the preschool, we ask that you either put the invitations in the children's cubbies or mail them. We ask that the child DOES NOT pass them out personally to the children, UNLESS ALL THE CHILDREN IN THAT CHILD'S CLASS WILL BE INVITED.

PROGRAMS

Twice a year, the preschool will present a program for parents, family, and friends to enjoy. We will present a Christmas or spring program and an end-of-the-year program the last week of school.

SUGGESTIONS TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN ABOUT TO ENTER PRESCHOOL

- Teach your child to dress him/herself- including coats and shoes.
- Provide simple, easy to manage clothing for the child. This is especially helpful to the child while taking care of his toilet needs.
- Let your child know that the teacher will always be available to help him/her whenever he/she needs help.
- Develop the attitude that preschool is a happy place, and that the teacher is a friend. Make sure that your child gets plenty of rest. This is especially important during the first few weeks of school.

SUGGESTIONS THAT CAN HELP YOUR CHILD HAVE A SMOOTH DAY AT SCHOOL

- Come at the same time each day.
- Pick up your child at the same time each day.
- Call if you will be early or late in picking up your child so the teacher knows why and can explain to the child.
- Do not allow your child to bring extra toys to school (Share items are ok on your child's assigned share day).
- Check your child's cubby and backpack each day. Take time to look at your child's work with him/her. Always read the notes and newsletters so you will know about special events.
- Please make certain that your child is in class on time each day. This will enable the child to enjoy all the activities of the morning without feeling left out.
- We ask that you do not try to stay with your child during the first few days of school. We recognize that you may very well be anxious about your child's initial adjustment. There may be tears, but frequently they stop as soon as the child becomes interested in an activity or the parent is out of sight. You may best help your child by encouraging him/her to accept preschool as a

friendly place where he/she will have a good time. Your child's newfound independence may surprise you.

EXTENDED CARE (Childcare before and after school)

Christ Lutheran School views children as a precious resource, given by God. We acknowledge our responsibility, along with parents, for the care and nurturing of children. Therefore, we carry out our mission by maintaining a program of extended school care to provide a safe, secure, and caring setting with Christian nurturing. This program is designed for parents who work, or who occasionally may need care for their children before or after school. The State of New Mexico licenses this program.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Morning extended care is available from 7:00 am to 7:50 am and after school from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday on all school days. If school is closed due to a snow day, extended care will also be closed. If the school schedule is delayed due to bad weather, the extended care schedule will also be delayed. All classes begin at 8:00 am. Any children brought before 7:50 am must be checked into extended care. Enrolled children may use the program any afternoon if there is room. It may be necessary to sign up in advance for the days that you will need care. Please check with the Extended Care Director.

FEES

The charges for extended care are \$6.00 per hour. At the beginning of each month, you will be billed for the hours of extended care used during the previous month. We ask you to remit your payment by the fifteenth of each month. Checks should be payable to Christ Lutheran School. A late fee of \$15.00 will be assessed for payments made after the 20th. Parents who wish to pay extended care on a weekly basis must discuss with the Extended Care Director to get approval. If you choose this option, your child will bring home an extended care bill on Monday for the previous week. You will be expected to remit your payment by the following Friday.

Late Pick-up Policy:

A late fee is charged for any child left at the school after 6:00 pm.

- When parents are 10 minutes late, the following calls will be made:
 - Child's home
 - Parent's work
 - Others authorized to pick up the child.
 - Emergency numbers
- When parents are 30 minutes late, and if:
 - No one authorized to pick up the child can be reached by phone, and
 - Parents have not called to inform us that they are on the way to pick up the child.

It will be necessary to call the police department and release the child to their custody.

The following charges will be incurred; this fee will be added to your monthly bill.

1 - 5 minutes late \$5.00	16-20 minutes late \$25.00
6-10 minutes late \$10.00	21-25 minutes late \$35.00
11-15 minutes late \$15.00	26-30 minutes late \$45.00

**After 30 minutes, if we have to call the police there will be a flat fee of \$50.00.

Parents who have an outstanding extended care fee will not be allowed to use the program if no arrangements are made thirty (30) days after the payment due date.

Sign-In/Out:

Children must be signed in and out each day, by a parent or other designated adult. You must sign in and out using the ProCare system, or full name and time of pickup on a hard copy of the sign in sheets. Failure to sign your child out will result in your being charged the full amount for Extended Care. All children staying in extended care will be clocked in and out in addition to being signed in and out.

LUNCH AND SNACK

Every child using the preschool extended care program beyond 11:30 am must have lunch. If you plan to bring lunch for your child, it must be at school no later than 11:15 am. ABSOLUTELY NO FAST FOOD IS ALLOWED. If you forget your child's lunch and will be unable to bring it to school by 11:15, we will provide your child with a lunch and you will be charged \$10.00. If your child brings a lunch box, please clearly mark his or her name on the outside of it. Preschool has a microwave to warm up any foods which should be served warm. The microwave is only for children in extended care. It is not available to children in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Please limit sweets to one cookie or piece of candy (no soda pop or energy drinks) as we are trying to strengthen our emphasis on good nutrition.

No snacks are provided for extended care, so you will need to send extra snacks if your child stays after school.

REST

It is a policy of our program and a state requirement that all children lie down for a rest time each day. A mat, sheet, and blanket will be provided for each child.

Thank you for your support and cooperation in maintaining these policies and procedures. If you have any questions, or suggestions, please feel free to contact the school office at any time.