



Parent Handbook
2009-2010

Dear Parents and Students,

Greetings and welcome to St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool! We are excited with this opportunity to provide your children with loving, quality Christian education. We hope this year will be a blessing to both you and your child.

The information in this handbook is intended to inform parents as to some of the most common policies, procedures, and schedules at SML Preschool. The staff and I believe it is essential for the school and home to work together to promote learning and social growth. It is our hope that this handbook will provide you with helpful information to enhance your child's education. Occasionally, additions or changes to our handbook policies may occur, and you will be notified in writing should anything change from the handbook.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at St. Matthew (503) 644-9148 or at toniaa@smlcfamily.org. I always appreciate feedback from my parents and students! I know that we will have a great year, and my staff and I are excited to get to know your precious children! God Bless!

Tonia Andersen
Director, St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool

MISSION STATEMENT:

SML Preschool strives to provide quality, Christian, early childhood education to the children and families of St. Matthew Lutheran Church and the community.

PHILOSOPHY:

Early childhood is a crucial stage of development in which to provide children with an enriched learning environment. Children should be encouraged to flourish as individuals, while understanding the importance of cooperating with peers. Above all, children should be nurtured in God's love.

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL RACIAL NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin. All programs, privileges, and activities generally accorded or made available to the students of the school will be available to all who apply regardless of race, color, nationality or ethnic background. We do not discriminate in administration of our educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other school related programs.

CLASS SESSIONS & SCHEDULES

(A) Monday, Wednesday, Friday (BLUE) or (C) Tuesday-Thursday morning (RED):

9:00 Greet children/drop off - greeting activity
9:10 Circle Time (calendar, weather, story time, large group activity, etc.)
9:30 Bathroom break
9:45 Snack
10:05 Gross Motor (outside or lower fellowship hall "gym")
10:20 Center Time
11:30 Music
11:45 Class over

(B) Monday, Wednesday, Thursday morning (ORANGE):

8:45 Greet children/drop off - greeting activity
8:55 Circle Time (calendar, weather, story time, large group activity, etc.)
9:15 Bathroom break
9:30 Snack
9:45 Center Time
10:55 Gross Motor (outside or lower fellowship hall "gym")
11:15 Music
11:30 Class over

(D) Monday, Wednesday, Thursday afternoon (GREEN):

12:45 Greet children/drop off - greeting activity
1:00 Circle Time (calendar, weather, story time, large group activity, etc.)
1:15 Gross Motor (outside or lower fellowship hall "gym")
1:35 Center Time
2:45 Bathroom break
3:00 Snack
3:15 Music
3:30 Class over

THEMES FOR THE 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR

September - God Made Me & My Five Senses
October - Fall Fun!
November - We Give Thanks for Our Families
December - Christmas
January - Winter Fun!

February - Community Helpers
March - God Created Animals
April - Easter & Spring
May - Dinosaurs & Space

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Please note, this is a tentative calendar. Some of the dates may change and other important dates may/will be added. We will let you know of any important changes to the calendar. Please put these dates on your calendar and be sure to attend any special events we have planned!

Preschool Preview Days: (parents are required to stay)

*ORANGE class - Monday, August 31st from 9:30-11:00 am

*RED class - Tuesday, September 1st from 9:30-11:00 am

*BLUE class - Wednesday, September 2nd from 9:30-11:00 am

*GREEN class - Wednesday, September 2nd from 1:00-2:30 pm

September 2nd - Parent Orientation for all classes, 7:00 pm (No children please)

September 8th - First day of school for Red Class

September 9th - First day of school for Blue, Orange & Green Classes

September (TBA) - Back-to-school Ice Cream Social

October 13th - Veterans Day - NO SCHOOL

November (TBA) - Fall Family Nights, 6:30 pm

November 26th & 27th - Thanksgiving holiday - NO SCHOOL

December 18th - Christmas program, 7:00 pm

December 19th through January 3rd - Christmas Vacation - NO SCHOOL

January 18th - MLK day - NO SCHOOL

January 19th - Pre-registration begins for the 2010-2011 school year

January 31st - Winter Wonderland Carnival, 12:00-2:00 pm

February 1st - Open registration begins for the 2010-2011 school year

February 15th - President's Day - NO SCHOOL

March 12th - Teachers at ELEA conference - NO SCHOOL

March (TBA) - Donuts With Dudes

March 22nd through 26th - Spring Vacation - NO SCHOOL

March 28th - Easter brunch & kids in church service, 11:00 am

May (TBA) - Mother's Day Tea

May 30th - Graduation/end-of-the-year Party, 7:00 pm

GREETING

The doors to the preschool will remain closed and will open five minutes before class starts (8:40am/8:55am/12:40pm). Parents must walk their student into their classroom. Please do not just drop your child off at the door and leave. Children need to be transitioned into their day. A teacher will greet your child and show the child an activity that they may do while waiting for the rest of the students to arrive. Please note that the first few times you drop your child off may be difficult and your child may even cry, but be assured that the staff is well experienced in how to handle the situation. It is often better that you do not "hang-out" too long, but show confidence that your child will be fine and have a good morning. If your child does not settle into their day, be assured that the director will notify you.

CIRCLE TIME

This is the time of day that we will gather in one area and learn about the calendar, weather, and read literature that supports the theme. We often do large group activities such as graphing, reading together or a science experiment.

LEARNING CENTERS

We have eight permanent centers and may add others as the learning opportunity arises. These centers will contain learning activities that will help your child flourish to be a well-rounded learner. Children learn through play, so what looks like "child's play" to adults is really critical cognitive, emotional and social learning. Each child will get to choose where he/she would like to go, however certain learning activities may be encouraged. Children are free to change centers and anytime.

Block Center - cardboard blocks, soft blocks, Duplos, Legos, wooden blocks, tools, tool bench, etc.

Dramatic Play/Housekeeping center - doll houses, dolls, kitchen, dress-up clothes, play food, puppets, puppet theater, etc.

Library Center - books to read in a cozy environment

Writing Center - book making materials, envelopes, stickers, letter recognition activities, journaling supplies, letter stamps, etc.

Art Center - easels, paint, crayons, colored pencils, chalk, chalkboards, paper, etc.

Discovery/Science Center - measuring items, manipulatives appropriate for the theme, science exploration materials, etc.

Math/Fine Motor Center - math counters, geo boards, lacing cards, attribute blocks, file folder games, puzzles, etc.

Sensory table - children can explore the properties of sand, rice, beans, water and other items.

BATHROOM BREAKS

We will take one break for the bathroom each day. Children should be in clothing that they can do themselves. Belts, overalls and other such clothing are difficult for preschoolers to do on their own. If they are not 100% toilet trained, please let us know. We will be glad to work with you, but please note that we are not set up to change diapers regularly. We understand that accidents do happen, so please provide us with an extra set of clothing and a plastic bag to keep at school all year. If a child has to use the restroom other than at a break time, a teacher or volunteer will take them. The restroom doors will remain open and if a child needs assistance the stall door will also remain open. All children will be required to wash their hands after using the restroom.

Please be sure that your child has used the restroom before the start of school. Our day goes very quickly, so it is helpful if we don't have to take too many bathroom breaks.

SNACKS

The preschool provides all snacks and they are served to all the children at once. With so many peanut allergies, all of our snacks are peanut free. We provide things like crackers, goldfish, fresh fruit, applesauce, raisins, cheese, etc. If your child has any other food allergies we need to know about, please let us know. We are willing to accommodate for food allergies when we can.

BIRTHDAYS

Kids like to celebrate their birthday at school. They will decorate a crown and we will sing **Happy Birthday** to them before snack. It is by no means required, but you may bring a special treat on or around their birthday to help celebrate, if you would like. Things like donut holes, cookies, ice cream cups, fresh fruit, etc. are all good choices. Please avoid cake and/or cupcakes as we do not have a sink in our classroom. Please keep our peanut allergies in mind if bringing a special birthday treat. Read labels and avoid any snacks that have nuts and/or say "May be processed in a plant that contains nuts and peanuts".

GROSS MOTOR PLAY

We will take the children outside to our fenced playground as much as possible, so please dress your child for the weather and bring jackets when appropriate (even in the winter months). If the weather is not cooperating, we will use the lower fellowship hall (the "gym") to play in. We will have balls, jump ropes, hoppity hops, hopscotch, and other toys. We will also play large group games.

MUSIC TIME

We will have music almost every day. We believe that music is an important part of intellectual development. We will sing childhood favorites as well as experience some music from around the world, classical music, flannel board stories, rhythm sticks, playing musical instruments and finger plays. We will discuss the letter of the week during music time as well.

LETTER BOX

Starting in September we will be studying one letter each week beginning with the letter "A". We have a Letter Box and the children may bring an item from home that begins with the letter of the week. They are welcome to bring an item everyday they are at school. Please help encourage your child to look for things that begin with that week's letter only. This is a great way to encourage home-school connection and to help the students to start looking for letter sounds both in their environment and out in the community. This is in lieu of show and tell. Please leave all other toys at home. We do not want anyone to lose a special toy!

STAR OF THE WEEK

Every child will have the opportunity to be "Star of the Week." A poster to decorate and fill out, the class pet and journal and a letter explaining "Star of the Week," will go home with your child prior to your child being "Star of the Week." When your child is "Star of the Week" s/he may bring a special toy for show and tell, be line leader for the week and have the "All About Me" poster up on the wall. It is a special week for the child!

LUNCH BUNCH

On Thursday and Friday of each week we offer Lunch Bunch. This is an optional program. The Blue & Red classes will have Lunch Bunch until 1:00 p.m. The Orange Class will have Lunch Bunch on Thursday until 12:45 p.m. and the Green Class will be able to drop off for lunch at 11:30 a.m. Lunch Bunch tickets are \$4 each or \$15 for four tickets. Your child can stay for Lunch Bunch every week or on an occasional basis. We ask that you provide your child with a sack lunch with and a drink. Healthy food choices with packaging that a preschooler can independently open are preferred. Water will be provided if a drink is not supplied. After lunch the children will have an opportunity for free play and activities. Please note that the late pick-up fee will begin at 12:50/1:05 p.m.

DISCIPLINE

Young children are learning to explore and test their environment and should be allowed to do so within boundaries. Preschool is not only about learning basic academic skills, but also how to interact with ones peers, and how to listen to an authority figure outside of the parents. We will not have too many "rules", but we do ask that the children treat each other and the teachers with respect. This means listening to each other and the teachers. We ask that children use kind words to solve conflicts. There will be behavior appropriate for certain times of our day, i.e. sitting quietly and listening to the story in circle time, following safety rules on the playground, etc. We do not expect the children to know these behaviors immediately and we will lovingly teach them what is expected. If it does arise that a child will not comply or forgets to be kind, we will first redirect that student to give them another chance to make the right choice. If the child continues to choose not to behave a "time-out" from the group or activity will be used. One minute for each year of their age is the amount of "time-out" the child will receive. After "time-out", a teacher will speak with the student to make sure they understand what is expected of them and then the child will be invited back to the group. If a "time-out" was needed that day, the teacher will let the parent know. This is not to "tattle" on the child but to have clear communication between home and school. If a child is continually disruptive or exhibits behavior that is dangerous to him/her or others, then a parent/director meeting will be set to discuss the situation. The Preschool does maintain the right to expel any student that exhibits violent and dangerous behavior. If you have any concerns about our discipline policy, please let the director know.

WEEKLY E-MAILS

Every week the Lead Teacher in your child's class will send home an e-mail detailing the activities of the week. Included are some conversation starters to ask your child. We will also add parent reminders, calendar items and other important information. Please read them! If you do not have access to e-mail please let us know and we will send home these reminders on paper for you.

CURB SIDE PICK-UP

Preschool is over at 11:30/11:45/3:30 each day. We ask that you arrive to pick-up your child promptly to avoid a late fee (see the "late fee's section in "tuition" for more on this matter). Please be sure to send your child with a backpack or bag so that their papers and projects may be put in their bags to go home. Children will be walked outside to the covered area by the brick wall. Please meet your child in this area. This makes for a smooth transition for the children. The children are asked to stay against the wall and wait to be excused. We will excuse the children individually once we see a parent. Please help us with this procedure, especially the first few weeks of school.

DRESS/CLOTHING

We realize that it is tempting to dress your child in nice clothing for school, but please be aware that Preschool is messy! We will be painting, gluing, playing on the floor, playing outside, and eating snacks. Please dress your child so that he/she may fully participate. We ask that children do not wear slick soled shoes, flip flops or Crocs. These types of shoes can be dangerous on the playground. Tennis shoes or enclosed buckle shoes are the best for school. We would appreciate the children wear clothing that they can independently maneuver. Belts, overalls, and complicated buttons or snaps are difficult for preschoolers to manipulate. Also, please provide us with an extra set of clothing (including socks and undergarments) for accidents of any type.

CLASS COLORS

To help differentiate between all five classes, each class has a special color. Refer to your child's class color for important information regarding dates and special events. The MWF morning class is BLUE; the MWTh morning class is ORANGE; the T/Th morning class is RED; the MWTh afternoon class is GREEN; and the Pre-three's class is YELLOW.

MONTHLY CHAPEL

Children will attend chapel on the second Wednesday or Thursday of the month. We go to the Sanctuary for a Bible story and songs with a pastor or church children's minister. Parents are invited to worship with their children!

CLASSROOM PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents are welcome to volunteer any time after the first two weeks of school. We ask that you wait to volunteer until your child is settled at school. If you feel that it would be hard for your child to have you at school with him/her but would still like to be involved, there may be, from time to time, take home projects for parents that can help in that way. All parents who help in the classroom will need to do a background check as per St. Matthew Lutheran Church volunteer policy. This insures the safety of all children and staff. The director will contact the parents who wish to volunteer to set up a schedule.

PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

Located outside of room 111 is a bulletin board and book shelf. Please check the bulletin board periodically for sign-up and reminders. On the book shelf you will find parenting/child development resources that you are free to check out. Please be sure to return the item in a timely manner.

COMMITTEES

As a part of the St. Matthew Preschool "family" we ask that each family participate in at least one committee for the school year. We like to provide special events to help enhance the students learning experience. To make these experiences possible, we need parent's to help plan and run these events. There will be sign-up sheets for each committee at the Parent Orientation meeting on Wednesday, September 2nd. Start thinking now about what committee you might want to be a part of. The following are some of the committees you may participate in:

- Back-to-school Ice Cream Social (September) - two families
- Halloween Party (October) - two to four parents per class
- Winter Wonderland Carnival (including Food Coordinator, Auction Team & Games Coordinator) - about eight committee members total
- Valentine Party (February) - two to four parents per class
- Donuts With Dudes (March) - four moms
- Mother's Day Tea (May) - four dads
- Toy Washing - four parents per classroom on a rotating schedule
- Reminder Phone Calls - one parent per class
- Photo Copies - four parents total on a rotating schedule

NO SCHOOL DAYS

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will **mostly** follow Beaverton Public School calendar. With the exception of teacher work days, if Beaverton does not have school then the preschool is closed. In case of inclement weather, we will be closed if Beaverton Public Schools cancels school for the day. If Beaverton has a two hour delay in morning start time we will not hold morning classes. If the weather is questionable, please listen to the radio or television or check the KGW news website for school closing information.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Assessments on each child will be made and conferences will be held in late winter. You may request to meet with the teacher at anytime to discuss your child's progress and experience in the preschool.

TUITION

Tuition for the 2009-2010 school year is \$165 per month for a.m. and p.m. three day a week classes and \$110 per month for Tuesday-Thursday, with a \$75 non-refundable registration fee for supplies & snacks. Last month's (May 2010) tuition and the registration fees are due at the time of registration. September's tuition is due by September 1, 2009. Tuition payment is due by the 5th of each month, unless there is not school, and then it is due the first day of classes for each session. Tuition is non-refundable. Tuition is not prorated for vacation days, sick days or holidays. If you need tuition assistance, please let the director know as scholarships may be available. Please be aware that scholarship availability is based on the amount of funds in the scholarship account. Scholarship information will be kept confidential.

LATE FEES

Tuition: If payment is not received by the 10th of the month a \$25 late fee will apply.

Returned checks: There is a \$25 fee for each check returned for insufficient funds. A late fee will also apply.

Late pick-up: Every family gets a grace period, but if late pick-up starts to become a problem you will be charged a fee of \$1.00 a minute that you are late, starting after 11:35/11:50/3:35. We understand that emergencies do arise, so please be sure to call and get a message to the director to avoid this fee.

Please note that failure to pay any of the fees may lead to your child being dismissed from the preschool.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If you need to withdraw from the Preschool, please submit a 30-day written notice on or before the last day of the month. Your child's withdrawal will be official on the first of the next month. If you withdraw after the first of the month, your child's withdrawal will not be official until the 1st of the following month and therefore your pre-paid May 2010 tuition becomes your last months tuition and will not be refunded. There will be no exceptions. Your May 2010 tuition (that is due at the time of enrollment) is **only** refundable if a 30-day written notice is given prior to withdrawal, and **only** if the child's spot is filled by another student. There are no refunds after April 1, 2010. This policy includes registration for the fall; registration fees and tuition payments are non-refundable.

WINTER WONDERLAND FUNDRAISER

Each year the preschool holds a Winter Wonderland Carnival. Parent volunteers are critical to making this a success. The carnival features food, family games, snacks, and a Silent Auction. Last year we raised \$4,200 for equipment, scholarship, teacher training and supplies for the classroom. Planning will begin in September for this event. This year the date will be January 31, 2010. Come join the fun and be part of our Winter Wonderland Planning Committee!

ILLNESS POLICY

We ask that if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms that you keep them home: any unexplained rash, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and continuous nasal discharge. If your child is not him/herself or is not able to fully participate in activities please keep him/her home. We want school to be a positive experience for your child. Please also note that we cannot dispense any medication, even over the counter. We strive to provide a healthy learning environment and rest assured that toys and surfaces are cleaned regularly.

We hope that you found this information helpful. Please keep this handbook to refer to throughout the school year. If there are any changes made to the policies, a written addendum will be sent home with your child.

In addition to tuition and our fundraiser monies, St. Matthew Preschool is supported by generous grants from the St. Matthew Lutheran Foundation, and individual contributions.