

St. Matthew Preschool

Parent Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool. We are very excited to have you and your family join us for a fun-filled year of learning. With Jesus Christ as our teacher, we will learn about the wonderful world which He created just for His children. It is our prayer that each child will be assured of God's love and forgiveness through Christ our Savior.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Luke 18:16

Mission Statement

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool is the educational outreach of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Spokane, Washington. Our purpose is to teach children that their relationship with God takes top priority in their education and in their life. God's Holy Word shows children how desperately they need a Savior. It also leads children to know Jesus Christ as their only personal Savior, the One who died for all, and who makes them stand before the throne of the Father, forgiven and accepted.

Philosophy of Education

We believe:

That the teachings of Jesus Christ so permeate the atmosphere of the classroom that children know the way of salvation, share the Gospel message, and are able to apply Christian principles in their attitude and behavior in all situations. The whole scope of the curriculum is based on the unfailing truths of God's Word, which are honored above all human wisdom, theories, and directives.

That each child is entitled to receive fair treatment and opportunities regardless of sex or race. Children are encouraged to perform at the level of their God-given abilities.

That each child, as a redeemed child of God, contributes to family, to community, and to government through loyal citizenship and by showing Christian love and respect to others.

Statement of Faith

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church and School teach that Jesus Christ came to earth to live as a human being – true God and true man. He was persecuted, crucified, died and then was resurrected, and ascended into Heaven. He has assured us of eternal life by taking our sins upon himself and paying the price for them.

Curriculum

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool offers a half-day program designed to enrich the education and development of the children enrolled. The classroom presents a wide variety of hands-on activities. The total program includes exposure to developmentally appropriate experiences and a well-balanced and integrated curriculum. The curriculum is designed to offer assistance in the child's growth in all areas of development: spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional. Language, imagination and creativity are enhanced through our diversified curriculum. We want to awaken interest and open doors to the wonder of learning.

Discipline/Guidance

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool believes in the power of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of discipline is to nurture and teach the child, in a loving and gentle manner, one of the fruits of the Spirit: self-control. This process is ongoing; members of the ELC staff will act as facilitators along the way.

The role of the staff is to:

- Prevent children from doing anything that will hurt themselves, others, the equipment, or the building.
- Use appropriate limits and expectations.
- Teach children rules of behavior, explaining them in a firm, positive, non-threatening manner.
- Allow children's suggestions to be included in a discussion of appropriate behavior.

- Deal with the behavior problem rather than “labeling” the child.
- Redirect/help child into a less stressful situation.
- Remove the child from an area or activity if the behavioral problem persists.
- Enforce Time Out – explain to the child why he/she is being removed from a situation or activity when a time-out is imposed. “Time Out” is spent in a chair in the classroom but from which the child may not talk or leave to participate in any activities. As a general rule, “Time Out” is one minute per year of age. The child is usually given the option of coming back into the group when he/she is ready to behave in an acceptable manner.

The role of the child is to:

- Learn that they are personally responsible for their own actions and choices.
- Obey and cooperate with the teacher. This is scriptural and necessary to foster a positive learning environment for all children.

Unusual problems will be brought to the parents’ attention by the teacher in a timely manner. Parents with discipline concerns are asked to speak with the teacher. Be assured that the staff will not spank, hit, or discipline children in any physical manner or speak to them in abusive ways.

At all times the child’s feelings and needs will be respected and he/she will be helped to not only grow in self-control, but to develop a Christian image of himself/herself.

Non-discrimination

St. Matthew Preschool admits students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies and admission policies, scholarships and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Admission/Enrollment Policy

1. The child must be 3 years of age by August 31 and must be toilet-trained to enter the 2-day class. The child must be 4 years of age by August 31 to enter the 3-day class. Exceptions must be authorized by the Preschool Director.

Class size is limited to 11 students in the 2-day class (morning and afternoon), 18 in the 3-day morning class, and 18 students in the 3-day afternoon class.

2. Registration will be open to the congregation and current families enrolled in St. Matthew Lutheran School before community registration. Enrollment shall be limited to space availability. Should a waiting list become necessary, applications will be considered in the order they are received.

Absence

Parents are requested to inform the teacher when a child is or will be absent for any reason. In the case of illness, the teacher would appreciate knowing the nature of the illness in the event it might be contagious. Parents will be notified of any communicable diseases to which their child may have been exposed.

In order to safeguard the health of all, children with the following symptoms must not be brought to the ELC.

- Rash (unexplained or contagious)
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fever (within the last 24 hours)
- Diarrhea
- Discharge or pink color in eyes
- Sore throat
- Earache or discharge from ears
- Cold or cough when accompanied by any of these symptoms

When in doubt, it is probably better to keep the child at home.

A fever reduced by Tylenol or aspirin still warrants keeping the child at home. A child must be without a fever for 24 hours before returning to school.

Medicines of any type must not be brought to the ELC or administered by the staff.

An up-to-date record of immunizations, which meets the state requirements, must be presented upon enrollment.

Appropriate Dress

Please dress your child for a day of fun and activity. Activities may include both indoor and outdoor play, so be mindful of weather conditions. We play outdoors in all weather except rain. Please send snow pants, mittens, boots, hat (or hood), and of course, a warm coat to wear when there is snow. Please send shoes to wear indoors when boots are worn to school. Velcro or slip-on shoes work best. They are easier for the teacher and the child.

Activities will include encounters with paint, markers, and other potentially messy things – please save the tears and trouble over stained dress clothes by dressing your child casually.

Rubber-soled shoes should be worn daily to avoid an accident and enable your child to participate well in class activities. Sandals and flip-flops are not considered safe for running and play. Slippery, patent leather dress shoes can also be a concern on our tile floor if there is a spill. Comfortable, safe footwear helps your child in circle games as well as outdoor play.

Snacks

Snacks are provided by the parents for the class. A monthly calendar with your assigned snack week will be posted. Snacks should be simple for you to prepare and send and simple for us to serve and eat. Please avoid sugary snacks. Fruit, veggies, and cheese and crackers are our suggestions. Homemade breads, muffins, etc., provide variety. **NO peanut butter or peanuts are allowed.** Beverages without sugar are preferred. Children enjoy and we appreciate milk, 100 percent juices, and unsweetened juices. Bring drinks already mixed in a container or a store bought bottle. NO drink boxes or drink pouches are allowed.

Snacks will be served daily and will be provided by the preschool should one not be covered by a parent.

Children's birthdays are given special recognition on one day in their birthday month. The snack calendar will coordinate birthdays with snack days. Please do not distribute party invitations at the preschool unless the entire class is invited. This will help avoid hurt feelings. Children with summer birthdays will be assigned a birthday snack day sometime during the school year.

Show-and-Tell

Children in our 4-year old program will be given regular occasions to bring a special item from home for Show-and-Tell. Sharing provides great practice for verbal and listening skills. Often items will be requested around a theme – such as a color or letter of the week. Check your calendar and parent letters for details. Help your child prepare for this. Unless it is a Show-and-Tell day, please avoid bringing toys to school. Books, records, tapes, and CDs are not considered toys. When they are brought to school, they should be labeled with the child's name. The school will not be responsible for any loss or damage to personal possessions.

Arrival and Departure

We offer morning (8:30 a.m.–11:15 a.m.) and afternoon (12:30 p.m. –3:15 p.m.) sessions. Please accompany your child into and out of the classroom. The door will be unlocked 30 minutes prior to the start of each session. Please have your child in the classroom 15 minutes prior to the start time of each school day. Children should be picked up promptly at the end of their session.

Occasionally you may wish to arrange for someone other than the regular person to pick up your son or daughter from the school. For the safety and comfort of your child, we ask your cooperation in insuring a smooth pickup of your child from school by following three important steps:

1. Give written authorization of persons you wish to be allowed to take your child from school. This authorization should be recorded on the Identification and Emergency Information Form which you completed at the beginning of the school year. Please update this form anytime you have a new person coming for your child.

2. Alert the teacher that a different person will be coming for your child. A note at the beginning of the morning or afternoon session will prepare the staff and avoid unnecessary confusion at pick-up time.
3. Prepare your child for the change in pick-up. Children look forward to and anticipate being picked up at their regular time. A change in routine can be very unsettling to a child. Please tell your child ahead of time if a different person will be picking him/her up.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is an integral part of an effective early childhood program. Your interest in the program shows your child that school holds an important place in your lives and that you value his/her accomplishments at school. Parents will be asked to help from time to time with field trips and class activities that need transportation and extra adult supervision. Watch for sign-up sheets for activities that require parent help.

Parents will have opportunity to list special skills, hobbies, etc., they have that they are willing to share should the staff ask for help. A parent survey will be provided. Please complete and return it to the school.

Each month your child will bring home a newsletter. You will want to carefully read this letter each month for information on class activities, monthly themes and concepts, snack reminders and upcoming events. These letters often explain what to bring for Show-and-Tell or may ask the child to bring an item to school for a project. The newsletter is a very important communication connection; please watch for it and read it.

Three times a year, a progress report will be filled out by the teacher to evaluate your child's progress while attending our 4-year old program. You will receive a copy of the final evaluation before their entrance into Kindergarten. Parents are welcome to visit and enjoy the children and the program. If you would like to stay for the school session (other than as a volunteer), please let the teacher know ahead of time so he/she can plan for you.

Communication

Proper and regular communication greatly enhances the education program. It is most important that parents feel comfortable contacting the teacher if problems or concerns arise. In order to resolve a conflict with a teacher or a member of the staff, parents are asked to follow this procedure:

1. Speak first to the teacher or staff person involved. If not resolved:
2. Speak to the ELC Director and/or the Principal about the problem. If not resolved:
3. Speak to the Pastor or request to meet with the Chairman of the Board of Education for final resolution.

Please see the policy in the school handbook.

We encourage and value home/school communication. Never feel that your concerns are too small or too frequent. Your child's well-being is our first concern, and confidentiality will be maintained.

School Calendar

We follow the St. Matthew Lutheran School calendar. Check your school calendar for those dates. If there is inclement weather, St. Matthew will report to local TV and radio stations, so look for our name specifically to see if we have the day off due to weather. We do not make up snow days.

Field Trips

We try to take 7 or 8 field trips a year in addition to having guest speakers. Parents, who are licensed drivers, have had a background check, and have adequate insurance will drive for us on the trips. Every child is restrained according to state law. If you are interested in helping in that area, contact your child's teacher. We do not travel in hazardous weather. The director will decide whether or not to cancel a planned trip. Parents will be notified of the date of every field trip and are welcome not only as drivers, but as participants in a school adventure. Siblings are usually welcome, but sometimes space does

not permit extra children. Check your most recent newsletter for that information.

Tuition Policy

Our School and Preschool at St. Matthew uses an online billing program known as TADS. This program allows families to easily make tuition payments online. There is a variety of payment options made available as well as possibilities for tuition assistance. If you have questions about TADS, payments, or tuition assistance, you can contact the Preschool Director or the Principal.

We want your child in our preschool. Regular on time tuition payments are required for your child's continued enrollment. If you are struggling to keep up with payments, please speak with either the Preschool Director or the Principal for help with this issue.

If withdrawal becomes necessary, St. Matthew requests a 30-day notice in order to contact a child on the waiting list.

Below are the 2023-2024 Preschool tuition/registration fees:

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION: \$100 per child, non-refundable
PRESCHOOL TUITION: 3 year old (2 days/week) \$1750 per year
4 year old (3 days/week) \$2200 per year

All families are required to sign a tuition agreement once their child is enrolled. Families may decide to make their payment in one, two, ten, or twelve installments.

Closing

Above all else, enjoy the year with your child. They grow up all too soon. Trust us to take care of your precious little one.