

Parent Handbook



Messiah United Methodist Church
408 Dominion Commons Way
Chesapeake, VA 23322
(757)549-1824

messiahpreschool@gmail.com
www.messiahchurchpreschool.org
www.facebook.com/MessiahPreschool

MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Messiah Preschool, a ministry of Messiah United Methodist Church, embraces outreach as a part of its weekday ministry program and has deep roots of caring for the needs of the community. Messiah Preschool opened its doors to the Chesapeake community in 1989. Our philosophy is to welcome children into a quality early childhood educational program based upon Christian principles and values. We strive to maintain our reputation as a highly desirable preschool program with personalized attention to the needs of every child and family.

We offer a nurturing and loving Christian atmosphere where our primary goal is to enhance each child's cognitive, social, physical and spiritual development through play and age appropriate curriculum. Every child is a "Gift from God", and we are privileged to be entrusted with guiding their young minds to discover the world around them. We offer an environment where each child will develop self-esteem, independence and experience academic success.

Our preschool operates daily from the second Monday in September through the Friday before Memorial Day in May. The hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Pre-Kindergarten	Monday through Friday
4-year-olds	Monday-Wednesday-Friday
3-year-olds	Monday-Wednesday-Friday or Tuesday-Thursday
2-year-olds	Tuesday and Thursday or Monday and Wednesday

Age Requirements

Children must be age appropriate **on or before** September 30. Age exceptions are reviewed and determined by the preschool director.

Program Overview and Goals

Two-Year Old Program is designed to provide a loving and nurturing transition from your home to a school group setting for older two's. They will engage in activities designed to improve communication and language skills, independent self care and hygiene, and gross and fine motor skills. Daily activities include free play, art, stories, music, finger plays, prayer and circle time. Children must be 2.5 years old to attend and are not required to be potty trained. Exceptions to the age requirement can be discussed with the Director.

Three-Year-Old Program encourages both large and small group activities. The children learn to interact cooperatively with others and are offered various classroom activities that will develop their social, cognitive and fine motor skills. They will become independent in self-care and hygiene, and must be potty trained in order to attend. The curriculum introduces the alphabet, colors, shape recognition, counting, patterns and rhythms, and simple science concepts. Activities include free play and teacher directed learning centers, circle time, music, art, and daily prayer.

Three Day Four-Year-Old Program introduces social and academic skills to prepare the children for a positive kindergarten experience. This is accomplished through self-expression, free & dramatic independent play, decision making and developing routines. Cognitive activities include reading readiness, which is accomplished through alphabet and letter sounds, as well as math concepts such as recognizing numbers, colors and shapes. In addition, language and listening skills are emphasized along with basic science concepts and introductory handwriting.

Pre-Kindergarten Program prepares the child for academic success in kindergarten. The benefits of additional days in Pre-K include an introduction to emergent reading skills, a deeper understanding of the alphabet, letter sounds, numbers 1-20, writing skills and simple science and math concepts. They will continue to develop both fine and gross motor skills. The children are encouraged to work independently, respect authority, and interact cooperatively with peers. Free play and directed centers reinforce weekly curricular themes based on Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards, Birth - Five Learning Guidelines. The children also participate in a weekly music class.

All students ages three and above should be completely potty independent and will not be allowed to attend school in a pull-up or diaper.

This Public Disclosure Statement is required by the Virginia Department of Education:

In compliance with the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, Messiah Preschool is exempt from licensure and is classified as a "Religiously Exempt" child day care center. Although Messiah Preschool is licensed for 100 children, the maximum number that will be enrolled is 98.

Messiah Preschool is a weekday ministry of Messiah United Methodist Church, and is located in the education wing of the church building. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee of the church approves staff positions. Position descriptions are available for you to review in the main office .

Our building is located at 408 Dominion Commons Way, Chesapeake, VA and is 180' X 120'. Messiah Preschool utilizes 8 rooms for daily activities. The policy of the preschool is that parents provide mid-morning snacks for their children; therefore, the kitchen facilities are not used by the Preschool with the exception of the refrigerator. The playground measures approximately 60' X 80', and consists of a large area with mulch-base as well as a large grassed area for free play.

Equipment includes the following:

- A permanent commercial play structure with four slides
- Two riding springs, two diggers and a balance beam
- One plastic playhouse and one ball basket

Staff employed by Messiah MUST be certified by a practicing physician to be free from any disability that would prevent them from caring for children. Lead Teachers have college degrees and complete continuing education courses regularly. All staff are CPR and First Aid trained. Documentation to support this is on file at the Preschool.

Since Messiah Preschool is a ministry of Messiah United Methodist Church, the Preschool is covered by general liability insurance which provides coverage in the event that someone brings suit for personal or bodily harm suffered during the operation of the Preschool as a result of negligence.

Hours of Operation

The preschool day is from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM. Parents are asked to bring children no earlier than 8:50 AM. The children are to be picked up at noon. If you are running late, please telephone the school or send a message on the Remind app, so that your child can be assured that you are on your way. Financial charges can occur after 12:15 when a phone call to the Preschool Office and Director is not received.

School Yearly Calendar and Closings

All children will attend preschool for nine months, from the second full week in September through the Friday before Memorial Day. *A detailed school year calendar will be provided during the first week of school for your reference.*

HOLIDAYS

Messiah Preschool generally follows the Chesapeake Public School calendar for most holidays. In addition to the CPS holidays and teacher workday closings, Messiah dismisses the full day before Thanksgiving, may dismiss additional days before Christmas and observes Good Friday.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING

When Chesapeake Public Schools CLOSE for inclement weather, Messiah Preschool will CLOSE also. If Chesapeake opens ONE HOUR LATE, preschool opens ONE HOUR LATE at 10:00am. **If CPS opens TWO HOURS LATE, our preschool will be CLOSED for the day.**

Health and Illness Policy

The preschool staff will make every effort to protect the health and safety of the children. Parents need to help in the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases by monitoring their children carefully for any signs of illness. For the protection of all the students in the preschool, we adhere to a very strict illness policy. Parents should keep their child at home when showing symptoms of:

- fever of 100.4 or higher within the last 24 hours
- sore throat, coughing, ear ache, congestion, runny nose
- nausea, vomiting,
- diarrhea
- skin rash, inflamed eyes

If a child develops any of these symptoms at school, a parent will be notified to pick up the child within 30 minutes. If any household member tests positive for Covid-19, you must notify the Preschool Director immediately by sending a message in the Remind App.

Discipline

Messiah Preschool provides a loving and nurturing Christian environment which enhances each child's cognitive, social, physical and spiritual development. Our goal is to guide children through the learning process of making "good decisions" and managing their own behavior. Each classroom teacher helps the children in understanding the classroom rules, expectations and God's commandment; "love thy neighbor." Each staff member will always guide the children with positive reinforcement.

** We encourage parents to communicate with the classroom teacher and/or preschool director regarding any long term changes (deployment) or serious illness that may disrupt or affect a child's behavior in preschool. Our staff is here to support and encourage our families during difficult times.

In the event that a child is not adjusting to preschool or large and small group interaction, a meeting will be scheduled with the teacher and parent(s)/guardian. A positive course of action will be determined and applied. If an adjustment issue continues a meeting between the classroom teacher, parent(s) and preschool director will be warranted. Together, we will determine a course of action that is best for the child.

Dismissal and Withdrawal

Our goal at Messiah Preschool is for every child to experience a positive early childhood education. After all avenues have been exhausted and if the discipline problem continues to the point of disrupting the classroom, the director may request that the child be removed from the program. All parent (s) /guardian(s) will have a two week notice.

Parents are expected to provide the preschool director with at least a 30 day advance, written notice that their child will no longer be attending preschool. Giving advance notice allows for the staff to help the child transition and celebrate their time at Messiah Preschool with his/her classmates. If a parent fails to provide notice, one month's full tuition will be due.

Snack Time

Snack time is a time for socialization in our classes. We ask for small amounts of nutritional food and drink. Children should bring their snack in a lunchbox or sealed container labeled with their name.

**It is the parent's responsibility to inform teachers and the preschool director of any and all food allergies!

Birthdays and Celebrations

We enjoy celebrating special days in a child's life. You are welcome to send in a classroom snack (preferably a nutritious snack for all to share). You may opt to send in a craft or schedule a time with you classroom teacher in which you will "instruct" a craft activity or share your child's favorite book with the class.

Holiday Party celebrations are organized by classroom parents. Please discuss the needs and guidelines with your classroom teacher.

Field Trips and Events

Field trips offer children the opportunity to learn and explore our community outside the walls of the classroom. The preschool will give advance notice to the parents regarding the activity.

All field trips require **PARENT PARTICIPATION**, and we will meet at the designated location.

The preschool will often bring the "field trip" to the classroom by asking someone with special skills to share them with us on site.

Photographs

Our preschool staff often takes pictures during special events and classroom activities. Photos are generally for classroom and preschool use. However, we have a FaceBook and webpage where we like to post daily happenings with pictures. Parents are asked to complete the Photo Release portion of the Student Registration Form.

Medications and Emergencies

An Authorization for Emergency Medical Care Form must be on file before or on the first day of classes. In addition all parents/guardians are required to list two adults and their contact information who are authorized to pick up the child in the event of an emergency. If a child sustains an injury or life threatening illness while in our care, 911 will be called. We will then notify the parent(s) or emergency contact(s) as soon as possible. If a child sustains a non-life threatening injury or illness, we will contact the parent(s)/caregiver and arrangements to pick up your child from preschool will be made.

*If a situation arises and a parent(s)/caregiver can not be reached we will make contact with the Emergency Contacts provided.

*If a child or any member of his/her household develops a reportable communicable disease (as listed by the Virginia Department of Health) the child's parent/guardian must inform the preschool director immediately using the Remind App.

MEDICATIONS

Medication will only be administered by specially trained staff members and only for life-threatening conditions such as severe allergies (ie. EpiPen). It is required that the parent(s)/guardian and the child's pediatrician complete specific forms and follow detailed instructions required by the State of Virginia for these situations. If necessary, the director will provide pertinent information. Parents must apply all insect repellent, sunscreen or any topical antiseptic cleaning solution, lip balm and lotion before or after school.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire and emergency drills are routinely practiced and conducted. All persons

Staff Requirements

Messiah United Methodist Preschool staff members are required by Virginia State law to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect to Social Services.

All Messiah Preschool staff members are required by Virginia State Law to complete a criminal background check. In addition, all staff members are CPR certified, and key staff member are EMAT certified to administer Epi-Pen and Rescue Inhalers..

Drop Off and Dismissal Procedures

MORNING ARRIVAL

Park in the designated spaces and bring your child to the front entrance of the building. Staff members will escort your child to their class room.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If you need to pick your child up early from the preschool, please request this to the classroom teacher in a written note or call the preschool director. All early dismissals should occur before 11:45 am to avoid confusion with regular school dismissal.

DISMISSAL

The preschool observes a staggered drive thru pick up procedure for the afternoons. You will receive a placard with your child's name at Meet the Teacher Morning. Please display this in the front of your vehicle by hanging it from your rear view mirror, or hold it up in clear view for the Director. Please do not pull forward past the orange traffic cone until your child is in your vehicle. For the safety of all children and staff, do not attempt to pass someone in line unless directed to do so.

Children will be escorted to the parking lot loading area by a staff member. Staff will open your vehicle's door and assist your child into the vehicle. Your child should sit securely in their car seat. Parent will then pull forward into the first available parking spot and secure their child in the car seat before proceeding to exit the parking lot.

OTHER EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the case of an unexpected inclement weather emergency, the preschool director will notify all preschool families by the Remind APP and Facebook regarding specific dismissal procedures. During all emergency situations, the children will remain in the care of the preschool staff until parents arrive at the preschool.

Dress and Hygiene

Cleanliness and neatness help to build a child's self esteem. Comfortable clothing that allows for play and for a child to be independent in the restroom should be worn on a daily basis. Appropriate clothing that allows for indoor/outdoor play and "messy" art projects should be worn. Tie, buckle, or velcro shoes with non-slippery soles are preferred. For playground safety, open-toed-shoes, sandals or flip-flops should be worn to preschool.

Please send an extra complete set of clothing (suitable for any weather) to school in a large zip-lock bag marked with your child's name. This clothing will be kept at school in the case of an accident.

Due to safety issues, we ask that you refrain from sending umbrellas to preschool.

ALL CHILDREN MUST BE TOILET TRAINED BEFORE BEGINNING PRESCHOOL EXCEPT for our two-year-olds. It is permissible for the two-year old program children to wear pull-ups. Three and four-year-olds must be able to attend to their individual bathroom needs. In the case of an accident, parents of three's and four's are expected to come to preschool to assist their child in cleaning and changing their clothing.

**Regarding any special needs your child may have, please contact the preschool director.

Personal Belongings

Each child needs a full size backpack/book bag large enough to hold a lunchbox, full size sheets of paper and art projects. The backpack should be brought to school each day. For safety purposes, please no rolling backpacks.

Label all items your child may bring to school :

- book bags
- lunch and snack bags
- coats, sweaters, hats, gloves and jackets

Please do not allow your child to bring any toys to school unless requested by their teacher.