



Messiah Lutheran Preschool and Learning Center
A Christian Learning Center

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2020-2021**

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Organizational Information

Messiah Lutheran Preschool is part of Messiah Lutheran Church. The Church Council is the governing body of Messiah Lutheran Church and School. The Preschool Board manages the Preschool. The Preschool is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). A copy of the EEC regulations is located in the office. EEC may be reached by phone at 508-798-5180; or by mail at 10 Austin St., Worcester, MA 01609. Parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history.

The Board consists of church members which includes a Chairperson (or Co-chair persons), Secretary, and Director. We meet monthly and encourage all parents to provide input.

Chairpersons

Dave Haschig

Secretary

Tonya Gasbarro

Director

Stephanie Maynard

Affiliations

Fitchburg Community Partnership
Messiah Lutheran Church; Missouri Synod

Our Philosophy

We at Messiah Lutheran Preschool are pleased to be in partnership together with you as we guide, direct and nurture your child. We believe that children learn best through a structured play based environment that promotes and enhances the development of the whole child spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually. We know that each child is a unique gift from God mastering skills as they progress from one stage of development to the next at their own developmental rate. Therefore, we encourage children to develop a personal relationship with God, a positive self-image and their own special interests, as they begin to move forward toward increased independence. It is our sincere desire and hope that all children can experience the natural wonder of childhood through learning based play in a safe and

nurturing Christian environment that fosters creativity, exploration and discovery in a developmental setting.

“Play is the work of young children.” – Bev Bos

Our Staff

Our teachers are state licensed and certified in the field of Early Childhood Education. They have been selected for their love of children, Christian conviction and dedication to young children and families. All staff members are certified in CPR and first aid, and complete yearly professional training to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Our Facility

Beautiful classrooms with natural light
Separate playgrounds for Preschool and Infant/Toddlers
Large indoor Gross Motor/Gym room
Parent resources
25 acres of woodland forest

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is structured around the following key points:

- ⊕ Christian centered – “Jesus Time” – Concordia “One In Christ”
- ⊕ Thematic units of discovery based on Massachusetts curriculum frameworks
- ⊕ Hands on exploration
- ⊕ Learning Centers: Language and literacy - creative art – blocks – music and movement – dramatic play — sensory table – science – manipulatives – library
- ⊕ Developmentally age appropriate, meeting the needs and interests of young children
- ⊕ Child centered and teacher facilitated
- ⊕ Scholastic Book Clubs
- ⊕ Occasional field trips
- ⊕ Special guests and visitors (i.e. fire fighter to explain fire safety)

⊕ Opportunities for involvement in mission/service projects

Parents and Families

Parents are a child's first teachers. Therefore, we encourage a variety of ways to allow all members of the family to participate in their child's education. Some of these opportunities include:

- Sharing talents, hobbies, occupations
- Literacy at home connection
- Fundraising
- Parent surveys
- Programs/Graduation
- Field Trips

We welcome and encourage suggestions from parents/families to promote a strong bond between home and school. Messiah Lutheran has an 'open-door' policy whereby parents may visit their child's school any time that their child is here.

Entrance Requirements

We enroll children 8 weeks to 5 years old. Each child must have a birth certificate, current immunization record and physical exam (including lead test with results). Messiah Lutheran Preschool does not discriminate with regard to race, cultural heritage, national origin, marital status, religion, political beliefs, or sexual orientation. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

Enrollment Procedure

After contacting the school, the parent and child visit the school, meet the staff and tour the facility. The parent will receive enrollment forms during the visit. The parent will complete all necessary forms and return them along with a \$75 registration fee. Families that enroll Infant's into the program will have a non-refundable registration fee of \$100. Infant

families will complete an infant intake prior to starting at the center.

Note: Registration fee is not refundable. There is also a \$25.00 fee if a check is returned due to insufficient funds.

Progress Reports

A written progress report will be prepared for each child at least once every six months, and given to the parent(s). If your child is a child with special needs, you should receive a written progress report every three (3) months, or as otherwise specified by your child's IEP team. A parent/teacher conference will be offered each time a progress report is sent home during the school year. However, parents or teachers may choose to have a conference any time during the year.

At times a teacher may request a conference or team meeting if they feel it is necessary and to best meet the needs of your child. Parents will have two weeks to schedule the team meeting when it has been requested by staff. Child care will be available at the Center if needed during the team meeting free of charge. Failure to meet with staff when they have requested a meeting or conference may be considered a reason for termination. Infant progress reports are completed every 3 months.

Our School Year

Year Round Program 7:30-4:30 does not have a beginning and end date. As the name implies, the program runs year round with scheduled holiday closings. Closings for our programs due to inclement weather are made based off the Fitchburg Public Schools schedule. If they are closed due to weather then MLP is closed as well. The school is closed for one week in August. Tuition credit is not provided when the center closes due to emergency circumstances.

Our Tuition

Registration fee (Toddler-Preschool)	\$75.00
Infant Registration Fee	\$100.00

Tuition is paid through the FACTS Tuition Management Program. If tuition paid through the FACTS Program is delinquent in any week, FACTS will send a letter stating your payment was missed. There will be a \$30.00 missed/late payment fee added to your account, and the payment will be re-attempted on the next pay period. If the letter from FACTS is not complied with, your child/children will not be permitted to attend Messiah Lutheran Preschool and Learning Center until the balance is paid in full to the FACTS Tuition Program.

Tuition will be withdrawn from your bank account every Monday at the start of each week. If a Holiday falls on that Monday then tuition will process the next business day.

***There will be an annual fee of a maximum of \$43.00 for enrollment in the FACTS Tuition Management Program, which will be deducted from your bank account upon FACTS receiving your enrollment contract. This is an annual fee when enrolling in the program. All tuition will be taken out weekly through the FACTS program according to each individual contract.**

****Messiah Lutheran Board of Directors holds the right to collect tuition rates in full/or a percentage of in the event a family requests a later start date or to hold a slot until enrolling.***

***Please note that registration fees and advance tuition payments are not refundable**

Transportation Policy

Safety of the children is important at our Center. Please follow the safety regulations and use an appropriate car seat for your child when transporting your child to and from school. When you enroll your child at the Center, you are required to fill out an Individual Transportation Plan and Authorization Form for your child. Upon arrival and departure all children are required to stay with their parent/guardian at all times. When walking in the parking lot, please take your child's hand and lead them safely in/out of the building. All parents/guardian are required to physically walk their child in/out of the Center and you must sign your child in and out at the beginning/end of their school day.

When a child arrives or departs from the program by public transportation, a designated staff member will get the child off/on the vehicle. They will accompany the child safely in/out of the Center. They will always take the child's hand and lead them to their classroom/transportation vehicle. Upon bringing a child in/out of their classroom they will sign the attendance sheet and stating the time of arrival/departure.

If an emergency occurs, only those person(s) listed on the emergency form are allowed to pick up your child or with written permission from the parent/guardian.

During field trips, parents/guardian/ or another adult that you have given prior written permission to attend the field trip must transport and accompany their child on the field trip. We will always schedule field trips so that we can meet at the designated field trip destination. The parent/guardian is to stay with their child at all times during the field trip. Please take your child's hand while walking through parking lots.

Emergency Pick-Up Policy

We understand that family emergencies can occur. It is of great importance when filling out the First Aid and Emergency Care Consent and Emergency Card Information forms that you have an adequate list of people to contact in the event of such emergencies. At any time when someone other than your emergency contact person(s) are not picking up, you, the parent/guardian must send in a prior written consent to allow permission of the person picking up.

* Under no circumstances, will MLP staff release a child to an unauthorized adult without prior written consent from the parent/guardian.

*In situations when someone other than the emergency contact person is picking up, please state in the note the person's name, address, and phone number of the adult picking up.

*MLP staff will attach this information to the daily attendance sign in sheet.

*The adult picking up must have a photo ID that matches the name and address given to the staff.

*MLP staff will check the ID and document the information on the Written Consent Form of Permission to pick up Child Form. The form will be attached to the daily attendance sign in sheet.

Transition Policy

Moving within MLP

Before a child is transitioned to another classroom several things will take place:

1. Teachers of the child's present classroom and new classroom will discuss child's development and cognitive skills to determine if moving 'up' at this time would be beneficial for the child

2. Parents will receive a transition form notifying them of their child's transition and have an opportunity to meet with the child's new teacher if they have not already met and visit the classroom
3. The child will spend brief amounts of time in the new classroom in order for the child to become accustomed to the new teacher, setting, and classmates
4. While the child is visiting, teachers will observe the child to see the level of comfort with the new classroom in order to gauge how long the transition will be
5. Teachers will maintain a transition record for the child
6. Parents will be kept informed either verbally or in writing of the child's progress through the transition
7. When the transition record is complete, parents will receive the completed transition record and the notification and recommendations for the child.
8. If we feel the transition period is not necessary we will adjust the transition period based on the needs of the child as a whole on a case by case basis.

Moving to a new school (kindergarten)

1. Teachers will have a discussion with the child about their new school at a level that the child can understand
 - a. What things will be different
 - b. What things will be the same
 - c. Making new friends
 - d. Things the child may be anxious about
2. Books or social stories discussing these ideas may be used
3. Parents will be encouraged to visit the new school with the child
4. If available, transition visits coordinated by the city of the child's new school will be made available to the parents
5. As appropriate, MLP will share information with the child's new school with parental/guardian consent. No

information may be shared without the written consent of the parent/guardian.

Late Pick-Up Policy

It is the policy of Messiah Lutheran Preschool & Learning Center that the parent/guardian of any child still at the center after closing be charged \$1.00 per minute past a five-minute grace period. Closing for the full-day program is 4:30 p.m.

According to Massachusetts state regulations, any child left at a childcare center for over an hour without notification from the parent/guardian will be turned over to the Department of Social Services and the local police department.

Inclement Weather

Messiah Lutheran Preschool we will follow the Fitchburg Public School calendar in regards to **inclement weather decisions only**. We will not be closed during public school vacation weeks. **We will follow their schedule ONLY for INCLEMENT WEATHER**. Please watch the news stations for delays and closures.

Outside Exploration

We consider the outdoors an extension of our classrooms; therefore we go outside as often as possible, weather permitting. We explore year round, including winter months as long as the temperature outside stays within our EEC weather watch template. Please provide the appropriate seasonal attire for outside exploration including, but not limited to: jacket, boots, snow pants, hats, mittens, and scarves. Please remember we do not have extra staff to care for children who are unable to participate in all daily activities, including outdoor time. If your child is unable to participate in outdoor time, please keep him/her home.

Meal Time

Due to the increasing and various allergies of students, each child will be required to bring their own snack(s) from home. We do not have storage for snacks that need refrigeration. Please use ice packs in your child's lunch box. To keep lunches hot for full day students please use thermoses. We do not have a microwave available.

We encourage you to send in healthy snacks. A list of healthy choices will go home with your child on the first day of school. Snack time is a very important part of your child's early education. Conversation is shared and modeled, prayer is offered for our food, set-up and clean up is assisted by the children and a relaxed social environment is reflected. Staff encourages and stimulates language usage with appropriate role modeling by sitting and sharing at snack time with children.

All food must be prepared at home. This means if your child has grapes, cherry tomatoes or any food that could serve as a choking hazard- they **MUST BE CUT AT HOME**. If these items are not cut at home then they will not be given to your child. Staff cannot touch individual food items and prep them to bite size portions.

****Due to allergic reactions, Messiah Lutheran Preschool & Learning Center is a NUT-FREE ZONE.****

Please do not send your child with ANY peanut/nut product or products that may contain nuts or that were processed in a plant that also processes nuts.

Toileting

Children will be encouraged to use the bathroom throughout the day and will be assisted with hand washing.

A complete extra set of clothing must be provided by the parents and kept at school. If a child has an accident, a staff member will help the child change clothes. The clothing will be put in a sealed plastic bag and given to parents at the end of the day. No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

Sleep and Rest Time Policy

For children in care for longer than four hours, teachers will incorporate into the daily schedule an extended sleep, rest time or quiet activities for the children in their care. We realize the individual needs of each child are different. Therefore, we will make sure the length of sleep, rest, or quiet activities are appropriate for each child's individual needs.

Each child will be encouraged to rest their bodies on their cot after their fun and busy morning. Quiet background music will be played. Teachers will address the individual needs of the children and will help a child who needs assistance resting their body. (Rubbing their back, singing a lullaby, or reading a quiet story)

When a child chooses not to sleep or wakes up early, they will be offered quiet activities for the remainder of the sleep or quiet activity period. They will not be expected to stay on their cots. The teacher will guide them to the quiet activity table in which planned quiet activities will be available to them. Staff will encourage and remind the children these are quiet activities, and some of our friends choose to sleep and rest their bodies. We need to use our quiet voices and respect that they need sleep and rest.

We value your input as parents and if you have input for rest time for your child and or quiet activities your child will enjoy please let your child's teacher know.

Holidays and Celebrations (including birthdays)

Messiah Lutheran Preschool emphasizes the gift of love from God in natural daily experiences and celebrations. Some specific ways we do that are as follows:

Birthdays – We will celebrate each child's birthday, thanking God for the gift of life to the birthday child and the special blessing she or he is.

Parents wishing to do something special or bring in a special birthday item to celebrate their child's birthday may choose from the following options. These options are only suggestions, you may choose to send in anything that is tangible. **We will be moving away from edible treats for birthdays and replacing them with non-food celebrations.** A few examples would be:

1. Coloring Book and Crayons
2. Sticker Pad
3. Pencil and Erasers
4. Bubbles
5. Playdough

In order to avoid disappointment and hurt feelings, please be sure that if invitations are being handed out at school that EVERY child in your child's class is receiving an invitation. Teachers will be happy to send home a list of students in your child's class for such purposes.

Halloween— because Halloween does not have a strong Christian connection and is primarily a secular holiday, we make our Halloween celebration a minor part of our day. We will minimize the negative connotations that the holiday may be associated with. For a small portion of the day the children will

be allowed to wear costumes and have special snacks or treats. We use the 'Pumpkin Prayer' as we talk about carving a jack-o-lantern. Please, in consideration of children who may be sensitive to frightening experiences, we ask that scary costumes (such as ghosts, witches, and goblins) not be worn. We suggest costumes such as community helpers, doctors, nurses, veterinarians, police officers, fire fighters, rescue workers, mail carriers, etc. Other suggestions include Bible characters and animals.

Thanksgiving - We thank and praise God for everything.

Christmas – We celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

Easter – We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus as our Savior, and the new life we have in Him. A few of the ways that we teach the children about Easter involve egg hunts and explaining how Easter baskets remind us of the resurrection of Our Lord. We use these only as props and not as a means to introduce a secular Easter into our curriculum.

Field Trip Policy

Field trips are another tool we occasionally use to help the children explore and understand the world around them. When a field trip is scheduled, all families will receive notification with a permission slip. Each child must be accompanied by an adult aged 18 years or older, and each child must have a completed permission slip prior to attending the field trip. If the parent/guardian is unable to attend the field trip, the permission slip must state the name of the adult accompanying the child and the adult authorized to transport their child (if they are different).

The morning of the field trip Messiah Lutheran Preschool will be closed until the field trip is complete. Children who do not attend the field trip must be dropped off at noon time (or the scheduled time the field trip will conclude).

Medical Emergency Procedure on a Field Trip

Children are accompanied by at least one parent on all field trips, and are responsible for the child in case of accident or injury.

A parent may give written permission to another adult to accompany a child on a field trip, and in that case, the individual with permission is responsible for the child. In case of an emergency, a staff member will notify the parent. If a parent cannot be reached, the person designated on the emergency form will be notified. The parent with written permission will accompany the child to the hospital and a staff member will have the child's health record and file available. An accident report will be completed and filed, and a copy given to the parent(s). The consulting nurse will be notified.

First Aid and Preventative Health Care Policy

All staff members are trained in first aid and CPR. The director and the health care consultant maintain first aid supplies. We will tell you about any first aid administered to your child. We will contact you immediately in case of injury or illness that requires more than first aid. We keep a quiet area for children to rest while waiting to be picked up.

Health Guidelines

***If your child is sent home sick/ill two times within one week then you will be asked to provide a medical consent document from your child's physician stating they have been cleared to return to school. This will help eliminate the spread of germs.**

Allergies - Identify your child's allergies on the information sheet at the time of enrollment, or if new, as soon as they are

discovered. Protect your child from exposure to allergens by clearly identifying the allergen and your child's response to the allergen. If your child requires emergency medication (i.e. epi-pen) we will need a copy of the child's Individual Health Care Plan which has been signed by the doctor. This plan should clearly state

- symptoms to watch out for
- treatment
- possible side effects of the medication
- consequences of the failure to treat
- steps to follow to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the Health Care Plan

Parents are allowed to train the staff in their child's Health Care Plan if they choose.

****Please note that due to allergic reactions Messiah Lutheran Preschool & Learning Center is a NUT-FREE ZONE.****

Colds - Please keep your child home if he/she has a new cold and a fever, a productive cough, chills, lethargy, or irritability accompanies it.

Conjunctivitis – This is very contagious. Keep your child home until the drainage stops. He/she may return to school with the antibiotic ointment, accompanied by a doctor's note, after being on the ointment for 24 hours.

Coughs - Children with congested productive coughs should not be at school. Please have chronic coughs checked by a doctor.

Chicken Pox - Please report any exposure to this virus so that we can inform other parents. Child may return to school when all scabs are dry. (7-21 day incubation period).

Diarrhea - Your child may be sent home if he/she develops diarrhea and has two passes of it while at school. He/she may return to school after he/she can tolerate a regular diet and has not had diarrhea for 24 hours.

Ear Infections - Your child may return to school if he/she is taking antibiotics, is comfortable, and fever-free **without medication** for 24 hours.

Fever - Your child will be sent home if he/she develops a fever. He/she may return when he/she has had no fever for at least 24 hours **without medication** (i.e. Tylenol or Motrin). Consult a doctor if a rash accompanies the fever.

Impetigo - The same guidelines as for conjunctivitis also apply to impetigo. Please watch closely for scabs, rashes, pustules, or sores. This is extremely contagious but can be cured quickly with prompt treatment.

Insect Bites - Please tell us if your child is likely to react badly to certain types of insect bites. Please put this information on the information form.

Lice/Nits - This is an alarming and misunderstood problem, and is reaching epidemic proportions in the United States. Lice are easily treated and do not indicate unhealthy or unsanitary conditions. We will notify parents if lice enter the school. Please notify the director if your child has head lice. Our policy is the child must be nit free and lice free before returning back to the center. If the child is sent home with lice or nits then the child must be out of school for a minimum of 24 hours before returning. Upon returning to the program the center Director will inspect the child's head before returning to the classroom.

Sore Throat or Strep - Strep infections are most contagious the day before symptoms appear. Your child may return to school when he/she has been on proper medication for 24 hours, has no fever, and is feeling well.

Sunburn – We use the same guidelines for sunscreen as for insect repellent.

Tick/Splinter Removal – If a staff member finds a tick on your child, they will carefully remove it with the techniques shown in

First Aid class. They will place the tick in a Ziploc baggie and they will give it to the parents at pickup time. Splinters that are easily visible will be removed. Teachers will wash the area with soap and water and will apply a band aid. Prior to a staff member removing the tick or splinter you will be notified and the parent will give us verbal permission or refusal to remove.

Vomiting - Your child may be sent home if he/she vomits. He/she may return to school after he/she can tolerate a regular diet and has not vomited for 24 hours.

Hand Foot and Mouth Disease- If your child develops symptoms of hand foot and mouth they must be kept home for 1 week (7 days). Children with hand foot and mouth are most contagious the first week of when the symptoms start. For the health of all the children in our center it is very important the child remains out of the school so this disease does not spread.

Pneumonia: If your child is diagnosed with pneumonia by his or her primary care provider, the child must be kept out of school for 1 week (7 days) from day of diagnosis and initiation of medical treatment. Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs and the child requires extra rest and attention when this infection is acute (the first week). The child must be able to participate in normal school activities to return after 7 days.

Influenza A&B (Seasonal Flu): If your child is diagnosed with Influenza A or B by his or her primary care provider, the child must be kept out of school for 1 week (7 days) from the start of treatment and diagnosis. Influenza is a highly contagious viral infection that most children will recover from but can be deadly in high risk populations including young children. For the safety of all children at the center, the child must be out for 7 days to reduce the risk of spreading the infection to other children in the center. The child must be able to participate in normal school activities to return after 7 days.

COVID-19 Exposure/Symptoms: If you or your child is exposed to a person with COVID-19 symptoms it is your

responsibility to notify the preschool as soon as possible. At that time our local Board of Health will be contacted for guidance on appropriate quarantine measures. If your child becomes ill while at school with COVID-19 related symptoms they will be removed from their classroom immediately and brought to our sick child room. You will be notified to pick up your child ASAP. Symptoms should be monitored at home and reported back to the preschool. At that time it will be determined if the local board of health should be notified and they will determine if the child should quarantine from the program or can safely return. Each possible exposure/child with symptoms will be treated on a case by case basis.

In the event that the Board of Health mandates an individual student or all students to quarantine at home families are expected to continue paying their weekly tuition payment to continue to hold their child's slot. If families refuse to pay during their child's 2 week isolation period then the child is at risk for losing their slot in the program and are at risk for termination.

Note: Our full COVID RESPONSE PLAN is available upon request

Note: Our full Health Care Policy is available upon request

Health Care Policy

The health and safety of all children and staff is vital to Messiah Lutheran Preschool. We do not have extra staff to care for sick children, so parent(s)/guardian(s) should not bring a child to school if he/she is too ill to play outside, unable to participate in normal school activities, or if the illness is infectious. Keep your child home if he/she is obviously sick. Everyone's health is in jeopardy if an ill child attends school. Please note the

health guidelines listed in this handbook. Please let us know if you are keeping your child home.

If the staff notices that a child is too sick to participate in school activities, you will be asked to come and pick-up your child. If you cannot be reached, the staff will contact the emergency contact person. The staff will make the sick child as comfortable as possible in a quiet area, and monitor him/her until an authorized pick-up person arrives. Please let us know if emergency names or phone numbers change.

Medical Emergency Procedure

One staff member will administer first aid to the child. A second staff member or volunteer will call Emergency Services (911) and notify the parent. If a parent cannot be reached, the person designated on the emergency form will be notified. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, and bring the child's health record and file. An accident report will be completed and filed, and a copy given to the parent(s). The Health Care Consultant will be notified.

Administration of Medicine

If your child must have medicine during school hours, we will require a written doctor's order (either a note from the doctor or the prescription label on the medication) and your permission (a filled out medication consent form). First doses of all medications MUST be given at home except for emergency medications such as Epi pens. You will provide us with the medicine in its original container, properly identified and labeled with the child's name. Medication cannot be dispensed contrary to the directions on the container unless written authorization is provided by the doctor. The consulting nurse will review all medication with the staff.

Each staff person that administers medication will be trained annually in the 5 ‘Rights’ of medication administration. All staff will be trained to recognize common side effects and adverse interactions and reactions among medications. They will also be instructed in potential side effects of medications being administered in the program such as Epi pens or nebulizers.

Safety Concerns

- Upon arrival, your child must be escorted into the classroom by an adult, signed in, and acknowledged by his/her teacher.
- At the end of the day, you must sign out your child, make sure that the teacher knows your child is leaving, and escort him/her from the classroom.
- We will only release your child to those people listed in your emergency form. You must notify us, **in writing**, if you need to change that information.
- We will practice fire drills monthly so that the children know how to react to an emergency.
- We disinfect tables, chairs, and toys on a regular basis.
- We will use universal precaution practices at all times.
- Due to allergic reactions, Messiah Lutheran Preschool & Learning Center is a **NUT-FREE ZONE**.

Please remember that our school has an open door policy and we encourage parents to visit. You may come to visit and observe your child anytime during school hours that they are here. Please call the school if you will be running late. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please feel free to speak with a staff member.

Plan for Natural Disasters, Loss of Water, Heat, or Electricity

If during the course of the school day, the City of Fitchburg or the State of Massachusetts declares a state of emergency, Messiah Lutheran Preschool and Learning Center will close. In the event that our school has a loss of heat, hot water, or electricity, the appropriate maintenance personnel will be contacted immediately to remedy the situation. When the center suffers a loss of heat we will continue to provide care until the temperature drops below 65°.

If it is determined that the situation cannot be remedied in a reasonable amount of time, the director will notify you to come and pick up your children. We will give you one hour from the time of the call to pick up your child, if you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts on the release form will be contacted for pick up. The center will remain closed until appropriate maintenance is completed and the safety of children and staff is not compromised. A complete evacuation plan is available in Director's office.

In Case of Evacuation

In the event that the children and staff should need to evacuate the building, our designated meeting spot is the church hall. If our evacuation involves asking parents to pick up their children, phone calls will be made from the telephone in the church hall using the emergency information given to the school on the Emergency Card form. Emergency Management Services may also be contacted using this phone. In case of such an emergency, parents may contact staff at the following number 978-343-7397. Please note that this number is only to be used in cases where the children and staff have evacuated to the church hall. Our Off Site evacuation place is the Sizer School located on Rindge Road by the rotary.

In Case of a Governor Mandated Closure

In the event Messiah Lutheran Preschool closes per the state Governors orders for an extended amount of time Messiah Lutheran Preschool will collect tuition for the first 2 weeks of the closure at 100%. After the initial 2 weeks Messiah Lutheran Preschool will freeze all tuition payments.

Closure Due to Low Staffing Numbers

In the event that the Board of Health mandates staff members to quarantine at home Messiah Lutheran Preschool Board of Directors will make every attempt to have a certified staff member cover in the given classroom. If the Board of Directors has exhausted all resources with finding adequate certified staff to cover the classroom – then at that time the effected classroom will remain closed until the Board of Health allows us to reopen or we are able to staff the classroom accordingly. In the event the classroom is shut down due to not having adequate certified staff families will not be charged tuition costs for that period of time that the program is closed.

Requirements for Discipline and Behavior Management

Children will be taught that God loves them and that because of this they must love each other. Christians show love by sharing, cooperating, and caring for each other.

Our rules are established for the benefit and safety of all children and staff.

The following will not be allowed:

- ✓ Hitting, pushing, kicking, biting, etc...we use our words to resolve conflicts and tell the teacher.
- ✓ Running or rough play in the classroom.
- ✓ Destructive use of toys or equipment.
- ✓ Hurtful inappropriate language.

- ✓ Transitioning alone, children must be with a teacher at all times.

Staff takes into account the individual needs and development of each child. If a child displays inappropriate behavior beyond the scope of the program's philosophy and goals, teachers will use behavior management techniques within developmentally appropriate practices.

For example:

- ❖ Redirection
- ❖ Problem solving intervention
- ❖ Modeling socially acceptable behaviors
- ❖ Language that promotes self respect and trust
- ❖ Clear and specific consequences
- ❖ Helping hands, not hurting hands
- ❖ Three warnings with restatement of inappropriate behavior and logical consequences
- ❖ Loss of privilege

If our standard techniques prove ineffective, teachers will consult with the parents to implement a behavior management plan and/or provide a referral if necessary.

At no time will we allow:

- ❖ Corporal punishment, including spanking
- ❖ Cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks
- ❖ Deprivation of outdoor time
- ❖ Denial of meals or snacks, force feeding children or making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence
- ❖ Confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen, or any type of equipment for an extended time in lieu of supervision
- ❖ Excessive time out. Time out will not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.

- ❖ Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or to remain on the toilet, or using any unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

Suspension Policy

At Messiah Lutheran Preschool we strive to reach and teach all children. There may be times when a child's behavior issues are not responsive to our behavior management techniques. At this time we will schedule a meeting with parents/guardians to discuss options, seek necessary permission for child observations in the classroom, and provide referral resources to parents/guardians. At this meeting a specified length of time will be allotted for observations and/or referrals to take place and another meeting will be scheduled to discuss the findings of the clinicians.

We, as a school, will pursue options for supportive services for the program and seek out professionals that may help us in positively guiding the child's behavior.

Just as we will pursue all avenues that are feasible to the school to avoid terminating or suspending a child, we expect that we will receive cooperation from parents/guardians to do all that they can to help the child and school avoid termination and/or suspension.

Before a child is asked to leave the center, a meeting will be held with the child's parents/guardians and, if appropriate, conditions for return will be set forth. These conditions may include but are not limited to a review by a child psychologist or psychiatrist or a pediatrician's report.

Parent Referral for a Child in Need

If the staff believes that a child needs additional social, mental health, or medical services, they will follow the following procedure for referring parents to those services:

The staff is responsible for implementing the referral plan if a child is in need. They will notify the director of their concern. The child's teacher and the director will observe the child for a time (at least 5 school days) and record their observations before taking action. The documentation and observations will be a permanent resource in the child's file. If the child needs food, clothing, or shelter, the process will be done the day the concern is noted. After a determination is made, a conference will be arranged with the parent(s). The teacher and director will consult with the parent(s) regarding the perceived need, and give the parent(s) a list of services that may benefit the child. Parental input plays an equal role with staff observations in the referral process. Parents are informed when the referral is processed. The staff will remain available to assist the parent(s). The school will maintain records for five years. The teacher will keep the records up to date. The staff will meet with parent(s) whenever necessary. A referral and resource list is maintained at the school and will be placed in the child's folder. Chapter 766 Referral Process-Contact child's school district as defined by his/her residence. Contact local Special Education Department to begin the process of referring a child in need.

Follow up to the Referral

The Director will, with parental permission, contact the agency or service provider who evaluated the child for consultation and assistance in meeting the child's needs at the center.

Termination Policy

A child may be terminated from Messiah Lutheran Preschool for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of tuition and fees according to Private Pay families and F.A.C.T.S. Tuition Management Program Policies
- Two consecutive Private Pay or F.A.C.T.S. payments are returned/missed.
- The health and safety of the child and all other children at the center cannot be assured.
- Child is at risk developmentally and his/her needs are not being met at Messiah Lutheran Preschool
- Parents not meeting with staff when a conference or team meeting has been requested by a teacher.
- Child's records are incomplete (i.e. immunizations not current, physicals outdated)

If you choose to remove your child from Messiah Lutheran Preschool and Learning Center for any reason (i.e. your family is moving) please give us at least a two week written notification so that we may prepare all children for the change.

Parent Information, Rights, and Responsibilities

Chapter 28, Section 10 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Office for Children, the legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of day care centers (including nursery schools).

The licensee (Messiah Lutheran Preschool) is required to inform all parents of specific information about their rights and responsibilities at the time of admission of their child to the center. Section 7.04 of 102 CMR 7.00, the regulations that govern daycare centers, contains more information.

Parent's Rights

Right to Visit:

You, the parent, have the right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is present.

Parent Input:

The program must allow you to make suggestions, but it is up to the program Director and Preschool Board to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

Conferences:

You have the right to request an individual conference with the program's staff or Director. The licensee has the responsibility to make the staff available.

Meeting prior to Admittance:

The licensee shall insure that the administrator or his/her designee meets with you prior to admitting your child to the center. At this meeting, the licensee, in addition to the information contained in this fact sheet, must provide you with the following: the center's written statements of purpose; types of services provided; referral policy; behavior management policy; termination and suspension policy; a list of suggested nutritious food you could send for snacks and meals, if it is your responsibility; the policy for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect; the transportation plan; a copy of the health care policy (if requested); procedure for administration of medication; procedures for emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; and a copy of the fee schedule. All of this information may be contained in the "Parent Handbook."

You should also be given the opportunity to visit the center's classrooms either at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of your child.

Progress reports:

At least every six- (6) months, you should either meet with the center's staff to discuss your child's progress, or receive a written progress report of your child's activities and participation in the center. This report must become part of your child's center record. If your child is an infant or is a child with

disabilities, you should receive a written progress report every three- (3) months. Center staff must bring any special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

Your Child's Records:

Information contained in your child's record is privileged and confidential. The center's staff may not distribute or release information in your child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for your child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

Access to the Record:

You should be able to have access to your child's records. The center must provide access within two (2) business days, unless they have your permission to take longer. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is located in more than one location. The center must have procedures regarding access, duplication, and dissemination of children's records. They must maintain a written log, which identifies anyone whom has had access or has received any information out of the record. This log is available only to you and the people responsible for maintaining the center's records.

Amending the record:

You have the right to add information, comment on data, or any other relevant materials to your child's record; you also have the right to request deletion or amendments of any information contained in your child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

1. If you are of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to have a conference with the licensee to make your objections known.
2. The licensee shall, within one (1) week after the conference, give you a decision in writing stating the

reason or reasons for the decision. If this decision is in your favor, he/she shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

Charge for copies:

The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

Transfer of the record:

Upon your written request, when your child is no longer in care, the licensee can give you your child's record or transfer them to any other person that you identify. The center should ask you to sign a form verifying that you have received the record.

RESPONSIBILITIES of the PROGRAM

Providing information to the Department of Early Education and Care:

The school must make available to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This included information in your child's records. Authorized employees of the Office are not to remove identifying case material from the center premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

Reporting abuse or neglect:

According to state law (chapter 119, sections 51A-E) all education and child care programs and their personnel are required to report all instances of suspected child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Therefore, all personnel at Messiah Lutheran Preschool are "mandated reporters."

Here at Messiah Lutheran Preschool we value, support, and respect all of our families, and therefore we intend to work directly with families to address and concerns about abuse or neglect. If at anytime we “have reasonable cause to believe” that a child was/is at risk of being abused or neglected (physically, emotionally, or sexually) a 51A Report will be filed with DCF. If at anytime a 51A Report is filed the director will address each report on a case by case basis and may contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform them and offer support in any way possible.

Our goal at Messiah Lutheran Preschool is to provide a quality, safe, secure, and nurturing environment for the children and their families. If at anytime you have any concerns about maltreatment of any child in our program by a staff member please speak to the director, or chairperson of the Preschool Board immediately. All concerns about child maltreatment by staff will be taken seriously, and will be addressed immediately in accordance with the state law.

Notification of injury:

The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury, which requires emergency care. They must also notify you, in writing, within twenty-four (24) hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

Availability of Regulations:

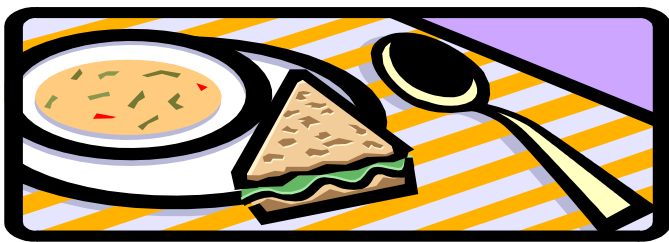
The center must have a copy of 606 CMR 7.00, Standards for the licensure or Approval of Family Child Care; Small Group and School Age and Large Group and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. If you have questions about any of the regulations, ask your center to show them to you.

Information specific to All Programs:

- A clean small pillow and blanket is needed. These will be sent home on Fridays for washing and cleaning to

prepare for the following week's care. Children will not be forced to sleep, but a quiet relaxing rest period will occur at some point during the day. If your child has a special blanket/toy that helps to soothe or comfort feel free to send it along. Please make sure all materials are labeled with your child's name.

- A morning and afternoon snack will be needed. This includes a drink to go along with the snack.
- A nutritious lunch with a drink is needed (no glass please). Please be aware that it is extremely difficult for your child to choose to eat the healthy things you have packed when there are so many treats waiting for them. We suggest no more than one 'junk food' in your child's lunch.
- Some healthy brown bag suggestions are included in order to help you plan a well balanced diet for your child (Attachment 2). It is also very nice to include a short note or special picture in your child's lunch, our teachers love to read and share in little moments that bring a smile to your child's face. Lunch boxes are not refrigerated so please include an ice pack in your child's lunch box. Please use a thermos to keep lunches warm. Classrooms do not have microwaves in them.
- An extra set of clothing complete with socks and underclothes is needed. Play is an important part of your child's day at Messiah Lutheran Preschool and Learning Center; therefore accidents are sometimes inevitable. We love to paint!!! Please label your child's items with their name.
- Teachers in the full-day program will apply insect repellent and/or sunscreen upon parent request. Parent will fill out appropriate form.



Brown Bag Suggestions – (Attachment 1)

A list of lunch suggestions and healthy snacks has been compiled to assist in planning your child's weekly lunch menu. Remember that children grow rapidly and require a lot of "good" calories, but cannot always eat large quantities. Make the calories they do eat healthy calories. Try to pack a main item and include fresh fruit or vegetables, a beverage, and a dessert each day.

Main Items

- Sandwiches – use whole grain dark bread or rolls. Tuna, egg, chicken or ham salads, turkey, roast beef, ham & cheese, jelly
- Soups, stews or casseroles – thermos lunches are good on cold days.
- Yogurt, add fruit, raisins or wheat germ for extra nutrition
- Cottage cheese – add pineapple, peaches, strawberries, tomatoes, cucumbers or carrots

Fruits

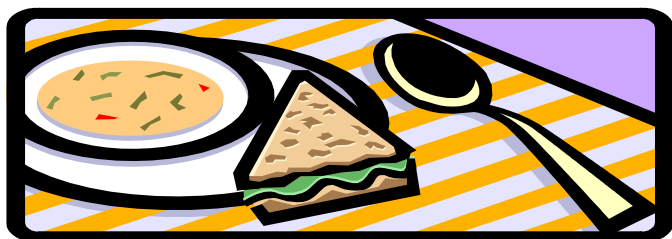
- Apples, oranges, pears, bananas, strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, plums, peaches, seedless grapes or raisins

Vegetables

- Broccoli, carrots, celery, green peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, sliced zucchini, yellow squash, cucumbers or beans

Beverages

- Milk – whole or low fat
- 100% fruit juices – apple, orange, cranberry, grape, tomato, pineapple
- Water



Child Care Food Program – (Attachment 2)

Breakfast:

	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Juice/fruit/vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Bread-enriched or whole grain	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal: cold dry	¼ cup	1/3 cup	¾ cup
Hot cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup

Mid-morning or Mid-afternoon Snack (Supplement)

(Select 2 of these 4 components)

Milk, fluid	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Meat & Meat Alternatives	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce
Yogurt plain or sweetened	2 ounces or ¼ cup	2 ounces or ¼ cup	4 ounces or ½ cup
Juice/fruit or vegetable	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Bread-enriched or whole grain	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal: cold dry	¼ cup	1/3 cup	¾ cup
Hot cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup

Lunch or Supper

Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Meat, poultry or fish cooked (lean meat w/out bone)	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounces
Cheese	1 ounce	1 ½ ounce	2 ounces
Egg	1	1	1
Cooked beans/peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup	½ cup
Vegetables and/or fruits	¼ cup (total)	½ cup (total)	¾ cup (total)

Bread or bread alternate enriched or whole grain	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
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