

Parent Handbook

Messiah Lutheran Child Care Center

1605 Vernon Avenue

Park Ridge, Illinois 60068

847.825.3767

Fax 847.823.6996

Email: office@messiahchildcare.org

Website: www.messiahchildcare.com

School Hours:

Monday - Friday

7:00am-5:30pm

Welcome to Messiah Lutheran Child Care Center and thank you for choosing Messiah as your child’s school. Since parents are the primary educators of their children, it is so important for us to develop a strong partnership between the early childhood program and the child’s household. We appreciate the trust you have placed in our staff to provide your child with a positive learning experience, and we take that responsibility seriously.

We believe that a high quality Christian early childhood program provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the whole development of young children and their families.

Our goal at Messiah is to provide a nurturing environment where the individual physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual growth of each child is encouraged and celebrated.

This is accomplished by developing safe, enriching Christian learning environments that promote:

-a growing relationship with Jesus Christ by modeling, teaching and practicing age-appropriate components of spiritual development

-loving, nurturing interactions between Christian educators, children and their families

-inclusive, anti-bias curriculum and policies that reflect the diversity of children and families in our community and the world around us

-a commitment to exceeding the standards, goals and practices of Early Childhood Center Certification of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA) and the DCFS Licensing Regulations of the State of Illinois

-continuing staff growth and development in faith, in understanding of how children learn, grow and develop, and in ways to support parents to the fullest

At Messiah Lutheran Child Care Center, we have a play-based, educational curriculum which provides a structured day’s schedule, within which the children are offered open-ended activities encouraging them to explore, create and socialize with their peers and teachers.

During their week, the children will participate in daily prayer, stories, lessons and art as well as weekly chapel visits. The children will be introduced to age appropriate cognitive (STEAM and reading readiness) and motor skills throughout their learning experience.

Communication between MLCCC and the parents can happen in several ways. Each child has a take home folder which will be sent home daily. This folder should be checked daily and returned to school on their next day. Information sent home will be placed in these folders (i.e.. permission forms, art projects, upcoming activities etc.). All of our teachers will e-mail their daily (and weekly) activities directly to you through Brightwheel or Gmail. You will also receive the monthly newsletter and calendar through e-mail. Tuition bills will be invoiced on a 2- or 4-week cycle through Brightwheel.

Scheduled parent-teacher conferences will be available in the fall and spring for goal setting and evaluation. Sign-up sheets will be sent in an email a few weeks prior to the conference dates.

In addition, your child’s teacher is available at rest time, in person or by phone, for questions and comments. If needed, parents are welcome to set up conferences throughout the year. Much information can also be found on the Center’s website. (www.messiahchildcare.com)

Forms

Several DCFS and State of Illinois forms for each child are to be kept on file and current in the office. These forms, including medical, will be given to each family upon acceptance into the school and must be completed before your child’s first day of attendance. A new medical must be brought in every 2 years or at the start of kindergarten.

Birth Certificates

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requires that each child have a certified birth certificate in his/her file. If you do not have an original certificate, one can be obtained at VitalCheck.com or at the Division of Vital Records, 925 E. Ridgely Ave., Springfield, IL 62701 (fax: 217-523-2648). We will make a copy from the original for our files and return the original to you.

Vision and Hearing Screening

The State of Illinois requires that preschool students who are three years of age and older be screened for both vision and hearing. We will offer these screenings in October. (Kindergarten vision form is included with their medical form.)

Classroom Placement

Ideally, we would like to be able to accommodate every family’s registration wishes, it is simply not always possible to guarantee classroom choices, staff, days, times and classmates. We will do our best to match children with any requests, but placement will depend on the timing of registration, the filling of certain classrooms and/or staffing changes.

Arrival

You are expected to arrive within your contracted hours, bring your child to the school and to their classroom. You will then sign your child in on the classroom Ipad that is located outside the door. Please assist your child in washing their hands and hanging their belongings. Please do not bring a child to school who has had a fever, diarrhea or vomiting within the prior 24 hours.

Please notify us as early as possible of any absence by emailing [office@messiahchildcare.org](mailto:office@messiahchildcare.org) or april@messiahchildcare.org Planned changes in pick-up (either time or person) should be emailed to the office.

**Cell Phone Use**

We ask that you do not use your cell phone while driving in the school parking lots or while you are dropping off or picking up your child/children.

# Departure

You are expected to arrive within your contracted hours when picking up your child. Please check your child’s backpack/take home folder for any important information,

If you are going to be late for any reason, a phone call is appreciated. It puts both your child/children and the staff’s minds at ease. Children will be released only to a parent or legal guardian unless otherwise stipulated on the enrollment application in our files or by written request from a parent or guardian for a particular day. A phone call or email the day of, will allow a one-time exception for that day. Any person authorized by a parent or guardian to pick up a child will be required to show a driver’s license to the office for identification.

Children picked up after 5:30 pm will be charged as follows:

1 to 5 minutes late =$5.00 per child

6 to 10 minutes late = $10.00 per child

11 to 15 minutes late = $15.00 per child

16to 20 minutes late = $20.00 per child

21 to 25 minutes late = $25.00 per child

26 to 30 minutes late = $30.00 per child

After 30 minutes = $4.00 a minute per child

These fees are to be **paid in cash**. After the second late pick up, fee amounts will increase.

**Building Security**

Doors are locked 24/7. No codes are given for the exterior North door. Please buzz and a staff member will buzz you into the first door. When you get to the second door you will use the code given to you at the beginning of the school year.

**Important information about our security system**:

When asked by a staff member, identify yourself by name-either yours or your child’s-rather than ‘I’m here to pick up’. If we cannot hear, understand or recognize your voice, we may need you to repeat your name.

# Illness

Messiah Lutheran Child Care Center reserves the right to refuse admittance to a child, or to ask that a child be returned home if in the opinion of the staff member, the child is physically ill or may have a contagious disease.

**General Illness**

Please do not send your child to school if your child shows any symptoms of illness within the past 24 hours, such as; unusual irritability, fatigue, red or sore throat, inflamed eyes, diarrhea, vomiting etc. In general, if you do not feel that your child can participate in all of the day’s activities, including going outdoors, it is best for him/her, for fellow students and staff, that he/she stays home until restored to health. **If your child has had a fever, diarrhea or vomited, keep him/her home for a minimum of 24 hours after the temperature returns to normal without medication or after the vomiting has stopped.** If your child has had a contagious disease, a note from your doctor will be required for re-admittance to school.

In dealing with head lice, we are a nit free school. Your child will need to be free of lice and nits.

**Covid Policy**

With the continuing spread of Covid-19, Messiah CCC will need everyone’s cooperation to keep

Messiah healthy for all of our children and staff. This requires Messiah CCC to enforce school-

wide policies to minimize the risk of Covid (as well as other illnesses such as flu, strep, ear

infections, etc.) from entering our classrooms. We want to keep our school open, but we need

EVERYONE’s commitment and understanding to stay healthy and remain open.

**#1** If your child exhibits symptoms for COVID-19:

Do not send sick children to school. If your child is exhibiting ANY symptoms for Covid or

other illnesses, keep him/her at home while it is determined what illness your child has

and the steps that need to be taken before returning to class. Keep school informed of

any illness.

Symptoms of covid include:

a. Congestion and/or runny nose

b. Fever (100 or higher)/chills

c. cough

d. shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (unrelated to asthma/allergies)

e. headache that persists or worsens

f. fatigue

g. muscle or body aches,

h. diarrhea, vomiting or nausea

i. sore throat

j. loss of taste and smell.

If your child is exhibiting any covid symptoms in school, parents will be called to pick up

their child

Students with symptoms of COVID must do the following to return to school:

a. Test negative from an at-home COVID-19 test (within 48 hours of symptom onset).

Other Lab administered COVID-19 tests are also accepted.

b. Childs initials and date of the test are written ON the test result.

c. A photo of test result is sent to office@messiahchildcare.org

d. MLCCC office personnel then must clear the student to return to school before they can

attend.

Please Note: If symptoms continue, the individual should retest or be tested with a PCR/

NAAT test. Always consider testing (flu, strep, etc.), should the symptoms be consistent

with those illnesses. Report results back to school.

**#2** If your child tests positive for COVID-19:

a. Keep your child at home for a minimum of 5 SCHOOL DAYS (plus week-end days)

after receiving a positive PCR. Report exposure to Messiah CCC.

b. Child may return to school after minimally, 5 SCHOOL DAYS (plus week-end days) of

quarantine (the day of testing is day 0, the next day is day 1, etc.) Child must be

symptom free and fever free without medication for at least 24 hours before returning.

Upon return, child must be able to wear an appropriate fitting mask until 10 days after

positive test, be able to keep mouth and nose covered throughout the class day and

follow covid hand-washing and sanitizing protocol.

c. Please bring in or email a copy of child’s positive test.

**#3** If your child was EXPOSED to a COVID positive family member or other individual

outside of Messiah CCC:

Please do the following to return to school:

a. Immediately report exposure to the school.

b. Get a PCR/NAAT test or have two negative at-home tests taken at least 24 hours apart,

before returning to school.

c. Childs initials and date of the test are written on both home tests

d. A photo of both home test results or copy of the negative PCR/NAAT test result is sent

to office@messiahchildcare.org

e. MLCCC office personnel then must clear the student to return to school before they can

attend.

**#4** A person tested positive for COVID-19 in my child’s classroom:

a. You will be notified of the Positive Covid-19 case in your child’s classroom.

b. Once notified we recommend that your child take an at-home COVID-19 test, and take

a second at-home COVID-19 test 3 days later. If either test is positive, follow scenario #2.

• Please note: If your child, tested positive in the last 90 days, or is fully vaccinated for

COVID-19, or was not present/exposed to the positive person(s), they do not need

to participate in this testing.

c. Classroom will not be closed until there are three or more positive cases in a single

classroom.

Please Note: Should a classroom need to be closed, any children that tested positive in the

last 90 days, are fully vaccinated for COVID-19, or were not present/exposed to the positive

person(s) will be able to come to school.

We understand this is a lot of information, but we are all here to support each other. We thank

you for your cooperation and all of your efforts to keep our children and staff healthy and our

school open. These guidelines are based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the District 64 Health Services COVID-19 Guidance for Parents/Guardians.

Guidelines can (and probably will) change at any time dependent on CDC, IDPH, #64 and

general conditions.

**Medication**

Only prescription medication will be administered at school. Prescription medication must be labeled with your physician’s name and phone number, your child’s name, the pharmacy name and phone number, a current date and the medication’s name and dosage. You must sign a permission form when you bring in medication for a staff member to administer. Dosage, time of administration and side effects will need to be noted.

Any medication given at home either on a short term or ongoing basis should be reported to the school in written form.

Messiah staff will not be able to administer any non-prescription fever reducing medication.

Topical Lotions

A topical lotion form must be completed when leaving any sunscreen, bug spray or other ointment that needs to be applied to your child. All lotions should be applied to your child before coming to school in the morning. Sunscreen will only be applied to students who attend after 2:30 pm.

Allergies

Messiah is a peanut and tree nut free school. Any classroom snacks brought from home must be prearranged with the classroom teacher. Please do not send any foods or snacks that contain peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil or any type of tree nuts. Check the packaging ingredients to ensure there have been no peanuts/tree nuts or peanut oil used in the processing. All classroom snacks must be store bought and brought to school in its original packaging.

If your child has a chronic illness or allergy, you are required to fill out a specific allergy related/chronic illness form with detailed information for our staff.

Children with any food allergies ***may*** be required to provide their own meals and/or snacks. Please discuss this with the Director. We will provide an allergy menu to you for review. Epi pens required for children with any allergies that may cause an anaphylactic reaction.

Registration

Registrations are accepted throughout the year as enrollment allows.

Organized registration for the upcoming summer and school year will take place beginning in February with priority admission offered to current students or church families. At the time of registration, an application fee of $50\* and advance tuition of $100 are due. (The $100 tuition deposit is not required to be placed on a waiting list but will be required upon notification of acceptance.) The advanced tuition fee is collected to hold your child's spot and will be applied to the first 2 weeks of school attendance. If you decide to withdraw for any reason, neither fee is refundable once they have been received by the school.

\*If start date is within a 2 week period of registration, a $75 application fee is due along with 2 weeks tuition and 2 weeks security deposit. This first payment needs to be paid in cash.

Former Messiah and outside families may submit registration forms, application fee and advance tuition in advance of the organized registration time. These forms, which are available in January, will be held until February’s priority admission is complete and will be addressed in the order in which they were received.

# Tuition Payments

**Tuition Payment/Late Payment Charges:** Tuition payments should be made through the Brightwheel App.

Tuition payment schedules can be arranged with the bookkeeper on a 2 week, 4 week or semester basis.

Although cash is accepted, we prefer payment be made through Brightwheel. Cash payments will only be accepted before the office staff has left for the day. (Teachers cannot accept cash payments at the end of the day.)

Tuition is due and payable on or before the first Monday of each tuition (either 2 or 4 week) period. Tuition received after 10 a.m. on Thursday will be subject to a $10 (per child – per week) late charge.

A charge of $25 will be made for any check returned by the bank.

**Security Deposit**

Payment of 2 (or 4) weeks tuition (less the $100 advanced tuition deposit) is mandatory on or before your child’s first day of attendance. A security deposit equal to two weeks tuition will be due along with your first tuition payment. It will be held as a deposit to be applied to your child’s last two weeks at Messiah **(with written two weeks’ notice of withdrawal)**.

If your child’s tuition contract changes, the security deposit will also need to be adjusted to stay equal to two weeks tuition.

**Non-Payment**

The security deposit will be applied if tuition payments fall behind. A child will be dropped from the program when the payments due and late charges owed exceed the 2 week security deposit. A notice will be given informing the parent if this withdrawal is pending. Any child dropped will need to go through the regular enrollment procedures, repay the enrollment fee and be re-enrolled subject to available space.

**Discounts**

There are tuition discounts for members of Messiah Lutheran Church families who have been members for one year or longer and families with more than one child enrolled at Messiah.

**Extra Time Rules**

If extra time is occasionally needed, arrangements can be made for extended hours or extra days.

The school requests 48 hours before an extra time is needed. Payment for extra time shouldbe made prior to the date of extra time. Fees increase if notice and payment are received with less than 48 hours’ notice. If no advance notice is given, space may not be available.

Once time has been approved and reserved for your child, payment must be made whether or not

time is used. Payments are not refundable for illness or personal change of plans.

### Hours and Late Charges

It is important to adhere to the time contracted in your Tuition Agreement. Children need to be dropped off and picked up within the contracted hours every day. Arrangements can be made with the office to schedule extended time on an individual basis or with a new contract.

When children arrive before or stay after their contracted hours, a reminder notice will be given. If it occurs a second time, late charges will be applied.

**Contract Changes**

**All contract changes will take effect on Mondays only. We do not pro-rate tuition.**

New contracts must be received by 12:00 p.m. of the Wednesday preceding the Monday it is effective. Any request received on Thursday or Friday will be put into effect on the second Monday.

A $15.00 bookkeeping charge will be assessed for any contract change that is made within 15 days of a previous contract change.

**Refunds**

**Tuition is not subject to adjustment because of illness, vacation, holidays, absences, or emergency school closings.** Summer program children (June, July, August) will receive a one-week vacation of 50% discounted tuition **with 2 weeks written notice.**

The Child Care Center requires two-week written notice prior to withdrawing a child from the school. The security deposit will be applied to the final two weeks of school.

If the Child Care Center finds it necessary to request the withdrawal of a child, a pro-rated refund of tuition will be made. If a child is withdrawn from the school at any time, a $50.00 registration fee will be required to re-register.

**Holidays**

**The Child Care Center will be closed for the following holidays:** Labor Day, Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, President’s Day, Good Friday, Independence Day, Memorial Day.

Messiah will be closed the week between the end of the school year and the beginning of the summer session, and between the end of summer and the beginning of the Fall session. Messiah will also be closed between Christmas and New Year’s.

In addition, Messiah will also be closed on Election Day as we are a polling place.

**There is no tuition adjustment for other school holidays.**

# Rest Time

Each full day child is required to rest in the afternoon. Naptime for preschoolers is between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m.

Kindergarteners rest period is from 1:30-2:15 following kindergarten enrichment from 12:30-1:30. TotCots are available for purchase at a 15% discount. We purchase them in bulk and it’s built into your tuition. We ask that the TotCot be taken home each Friday to be laundered. **Please label your child’s TotCot**. A child may bring a small stuffed toy. Kindergarten/Jr. Kdgn. children may bring a beach size towel or blanket that size to use during their quiet/rest time.

# Outdoor Play

We try to go outside every day. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather conditions. Warm outdoor pants, scarves and mittens are needed in cold weather. Boots are a must for snowy and muddy days. When children wear boots, please remember to bring an extra pair of shoes. Please bring outdoor clothes every day, as sometimes weather conditions improve as the day goes on. Gym shoes with rubber soles are needed for safe school play. **Be sure to label all outdoor clothing including boots and mittens/gloves**

During the summer, afternoon children may bring a swimsuit and towel for sprinkler play. Please apply sunscreen before school and provide sunscreen to be re-applied later in the day. A topical ointment permission form must be filled out for us to re-apply sunscreen throughout the day.

Tricycles, Big Wheels, roller skates and scooters may be brought to school (weather permitting) but need to be taken home each evening. Helmets are required to ride any outdoor large toys and pads are additionally required for roller skates and rollerblades.

**Labels**

**Please label everything**. Make sure that items of clothing such as coats, sweaters, boots, hats, mittens and scarves are labeled.

Toys, books, or show-and tell items should be labeled with your child’s name. We encourage you to send “larger” toys, as small items are easily lost. Please limit toys to one item at a time**.**

**Lost and Found**

If any of your child’s personal belongings are missing please check with your child’s teacher or the office (send an email or ask at the office). We will be happy to check our lost and found.

**Personal Items**

We need to be prepared for an occasional “accident” (outdoor play as well as toilet). Please bring a complete change of clothing (including socks) to be left at school in a bag on your child’s hook in the school hallway. When these items are sent home, a replacement should be sent back to school as quickly as possible. If your child wears clothing that belongs to the Child Care Center, please launder and return it as soon as possible.

Please check periodically to make sure the change of clothing is ‘season’ appropriate and the correct size.

**Parents of our younger students please note Accidents** are developmentally appropriate at age 2-3. Please dress your child in clothing that they can easily manage in a hurry i.e., elastic waistband pants rather than overalls, belts, zippers, etc.

**Show and Tell (not all classrooms)**

Please check your child’s monthly curriculum calendars for Show and Tell days. Children are encouraged to bring one item that they can show to the class and talk about. The item should be unbreakable. However, in special cases the teacher can keep an item out of reach until the appropriate time. Please label the item.

**Emergency Closings**

In the unlikely, but possible, event of an unscheduled emergency closing due to severe snow, ice, flooding or; no water, heat or electricity, parents will emailed as soon as possible. There will be no tuition adjustments for emergency closings. We do not generally close due to cold temperatures, unless there is a heat or electricity outage.

**Peanut Free/Tree Nut Free**

**Messiah Child Care Center is a peanut and tree nut free school.**

**Snacks and Birthday Treats from home**

Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided daily by Messiah CCC . Parents who wish to bring in snacks for their child’s class (to celebrate a birthday, child of the week, holidays or for no particular reason at all) must make arrangements with the classroom teacher in advance to ensure that they are not already receiving snacks from another child on that day or that the snack being brought in is allergy appropriate. **We cannot serve home baked treats. Our licensing standards require all outside snacks to be store bought and labeled with ingredients.**

All treats purchased need to be peanut/tree nut free and we do not serve candy as a snack. We would appreciate healthy treats such as veggies, fruit, yogurt etc.

**Please do not leave food in your child’s backpack .**

**Water Bottles**

Your child/children need to bring in a refillable water bottle from home labeled with their name on it to be used during outdoor play times in the warm weather. They may **only** bring water in the bottle. No other beverages will be permitted.

# Discipline Policy

Discipline shall be the responsibility of adults who have an ongoing relationship with a child.

Discipline shall be developmentally related to the child’s age and shall not be out of proportion to the inappropriate behavior. The child shall be made aware of the relationship between the act and the consequences. Discipline will include talking with a teacher about the behavior and either re-entry into the activity or direction to a more suitable activity.

Discipline shall encourage self-discipline, including when appropriate, allowing school age children to solve their own interpersonal conflicts.

If there is an assessment of a child’s pattern of unacceptable behavior, the staff and parents shall be aware of it, in order to co-operate in carrying out the specific plan developed for him or her. A behavioral transition plan will be created and will include the following:

♣ Written guidance and intervention policies; parents/guardians notified upon enrollment of policy. ♣ Initial and ongoing behavior documented with observations, notes, and dates. ♣ Ongoing communication with parents/guardians, in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner, documented with notes and dates, ♣ Ongoing program efforts to improve capacity for dealing with challenging behaviors and improving teacher-child interactions (technical support, training, professional development, community resources). ♣ Strategies to be implemented to prevent challenging behaviors and promote an increase in positive behaviors and a supportive teacher-child relationship. A Program Transition Plan will be initiated only after all reasonable efforts have been made to implement the action steps and strategies and utilize the community resources identified.

No child shall be subjected, under any circumstances, to corporal punishment inflicted in any manner upon the body or to verbal abuse or be deprived of regular scheduled meals or any part of meals as punishment or punished for toilet accidents.

Please see the separate discipline policy sheet for additional information.

**Non-discrimination policy**

We do not discriminate based on religion, race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

**Release of Personal Information**

The Center will not release any personal information on the child or the family without written consent from the family.

If a child is to be observed by an outside teacher or doctor, the parent must sign a written release to Messiah, allowing the observation to take place.

**Pesticides**

Commercial chemicals, if used, shall be applied by a licensed pest control operator and shall meet all standards of the Department of Public Health (Structural Pest Control Code, 77 Ill. Adm. Code 830). Chemicals for insect and rodent control shall be applied in minimum amounts and shall not be used when children are present in the facility. Application of these chemicals, when necessary, will take place on the weekends. A record of any pesticides used shall be maintained at the facility.

Messiah maintains a monthly pest management contract with International Exterminator. If you would like more information, please contact the school office.

We have received the MLCCC parent handbook.

Parent Signature: Date:

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Parent Signature: Date:

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Director Signature: Date:

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