

Parent Handbook

2019 - 2020



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Introduction

This handbook has been prepared in order that you may know the policies and better understand the program as we work together to help your child through the successful completion of the school year.

We welcome you and your child to Bethel Christian Preschool and hope the learning experiences here will be happy, wholesome ones. As parents you are cordially invited to visit us, ask questions, and make suggestions. The best assurance for the success of your child's experience is the close cooperation and understanding of parents and staff.

Bethel Christian Preschool was established in 1981 by a committee of concerned parents and teachers who realized a need for quality Christian preschools in the community. Our preschool center has been planned for 3 and 4 year-old children of any of race, color, and national or ethnic origin, with the goal of helping them in their spiritual, physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development. We will strive to give your child the loving care and guidance that children need in their formative years. God, through Jesus Christ, has called us to this ministry for children and has placed His great love for them in our hearts. We are blessed that you have entrusted them to us. May their lives be enriched and the Lord glorified as we partner with you.

The preschool is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International.



Objective Statement

To develop the “whole” child spiritually, physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally so that the child may acquire, first a love for Christ, and consequently a love of learning.

1. Spiritual

To help each child to:

- a. Enjoy stories from the Bible.
- b. Learn Bible verses and songs.
- c. Know that Jesus is God’s Son.
- d. Feel that Jesus is his/her friend.
- e. Know of God’s love and care.
- f. See Jesus in others.
- g. See obedience to authority as obedience unto God.

2. Physical

To help each child to:

- a. Develop gross and fine motor skills
- b. Establish desirable personal habits.
- c. Care for personal needs independently.
- d. Know simple rules for safety.

3. Cognitive

To help each child begin to:

- a. Listen attentively.
- b. Understand and follow directions.
- c. Express self clearly (language skill).
- d. Recognize and write own name by age 4.
- e. Recognize colors, alphabet, numerals, basic shapes, and simple comparisons.
- f. Develop interest and appreciation for music, art, literature, and science.
- g. Discover new areas of interest.

4. Social and Emotional

- a. Develop a good self-concept through God’s perspective.
- b. Instill self-discipline.
- c. Learn to express his/her emotions in acceptable outlets.
- d. Establishing Christ-like characteristics of kindness, thoughtfulness, and gentleness to others.

Registration and Fees

Registration

The registration fee of \$55.00 for both three and four year-olds is non-refundable.

Tuition

Tuition for the *two day 3 year-old program* is \$190/month and tuition for the *three day 4 year-old program* is \$225/month; \$360/month for extended day. Tuition is collected a month in advance in nine monthly installments beginning August 1st. The last payment is April 1st. All tuition payments are non-refundable and may be placed in the collection box in the hallway.

Delinquency Fee

Payments later than the 10th of the month will be assessed a **late fee of \$5.00** a week for every week after the 10th of the month. The second month of nonpayment will result in the withdrawing of your child from the program.

Late Pickup Fee

A **late pick-up fee of \$5.00 will be charged for every fifteen minutes past the hour of pick-up**. Repeated late payments or pick-ups may result in dismissal of the child from the program. Please bear in mind that teachers are not allowed to leave your child unattended. Teachers have a great deal of after class/before class preparation work to do. Prompt pick-up is **very** important to our schedule. Your sensitive cooperation in this matter is very necessary and appreciated.

Returned Checks

If your check is returned a **\$15.00** processing fee will be charged. More than one returned check will require all future payments to be made in cash.

Health Certificates

Your child's doctor must fill out immunization certification forms and medical forms. State law requires this record and we are responsible to keep them current. *All records must be submitted on or before the first day of school.* Updates on any immunizations for all 3's re-entering as 4's in the fall should be forwarded as well.

Toilet Training

All children must be toilet trained before entering preschool. If your child has multiple accidents, a meeting will be scheduled with the teacher to determine your child's readiness for school.

Days & Hours of Operation

AM 3 year-old class

Tues/Thurs
9:00 am – 11:30 am

AM 4 year-old class

Mon/Wed/Fri
9:00 am – 11:30 am
or
9:00 am – 1:00 pm
(enrollment permitting)

Please understand that the staff is in prayer just before the children's arrival and may not answer the door for admittance prior to that time. Help your child establish the habit of promptness by having them to school on time.

We use **Class Dojo** as a way of communicating and keeping you up to date on Preschool happenings. Messaging through Class Dojo is the best way to communicate with your child's teacher. You can also call the preschool number **(410) 465-1192** as the primary line when communicating with the teachers. If you get the answering machine, please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible. If the phone call is urgent and you get the answering machine, and you've already tried messaging through Class Dojo without reply, please call the church number **(410) 465-5690**. Our church secretary works part time, but if she is in, she will forward the message to the teacher immediately.

School Closings

Bethel Christian Preschool follows Howard County Public School policy for holidays and school closings. This also applies to school closings due to inclement weather, with a few exceptions. If Howard County schools open late, we will have a **ONE-HOUR** late opening for all morning classes. (The morning classes will meet from 10:00-11:30.)

We will also do our best to get this information to you through various forms of communication including email, preschool website, Class Dojo messaging, etc.

Clothing

All outerwear, boots, and extra clothing should be **clearly labeled with your child's LAST name**. Dress your child comfortably in play clothing. Please bear in mind that we will be taking children outdoors whenever possible. They will be climbing on play equipment, jumping, and running, so **PLEASE** be sure to dress your child with rubber soles that can grip playground equipment. Dress shoes with smooth soles, strapless shoes such as clogs, and cowboy-type boots are not safe on the playground.

Extra clothing should be provided in case of an emergency change. Please have a set of clothes **clearly marked with your child's name**, sent to preschool the first week of school. The clothes should be packed in a clear "zip lock" type plastic bag with your child's name written on the bag. When winter weather arrives, we ask that you exchange

these for heavier weight clothing. When spring arrives, reverse apparel to have the lightweight clothing available once again. These clothes are kept in the child's cubby.

Toys

No toys should be brought to school unless a special sharing day has been indicated on your monthly calendar. Children may certainly show the teacher at the door when entering the school something he or she has brought, but it is to return home with the parent at drop-off. Please also instruct your child that school toys remain at school as his/her toys remain at home. Occasionally a child will take a school toy home. Please have your child return it to school, explaining one missing piece can ruin an expensive toy set, and reinforcing that school toys and home toys are separate.

Screen Time Policy

The children will have limited use of appropriate interactive technology to support, but not replace, creative play, physical activity, hands-on exploration, outdoor experiences, social interactions, and other developmentally appropriate learning activities. This type of technology may include educational software, games, and/or ebooks. The use of age appropriate, passive non-interactive technology such as videos may occasionally be used for special events or holidays; but will not be viewed more than 30 minutes per week.

Mailboxes

Each child will be assigned a mailbox for daily artwork, notes to parents, etc. Please check your child's mailbox everyday and remove all take-home papers.

Illness

If a child has a fever or any of the symptoms listed below, we must insist that you keep him/her out of school. A child should be fever free for 24 hours before being allowed to return to school.

- Severe coughing
- Breathing trouble
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Infected skin patches
- Unusual behavior
- Diarrhea
- Green or yellow nasal mucous
- Gray or white stool
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite

Allergies

Due to allergies we are a “**peanut free**” school. Please read labels on all food items brought to school from home. We are trying to make this a safe environment for all children in our care.

Parent/Child Events

Dad's Night

A special night in March or April is scheduled for Dad, Granddad, or a special friend and child to create a project together. This is always a favorite event for those who participate.

Celebration for Mom

Moms receive an invitation to visit the classroom and share a special snack with their children for a Mother's Day celebration.

Field Trips

The purpose of field trips is to be an enriching experience to help the child appreciate the people and places that contribute to his/her life. They are also wonderful memory making, bonding time with parents. You will be notified in advance of all field trips. A signed permission slip must be filled out and filed with the school for each child to participate. We encourage as many parents as possible to participate because field trips are real highlights of the school year. We strive to schedule trips that are the most affordable and pertinent to our studies.

Birthday Policies

A birthday is a special day, especially for 3 and 4 year-olds! We will try to make it fun for your child by singing "Happy Birthday" to them at snack time and letting them select a gift from the toy-filled cake. Each child receives a handmade, personalized birthday hat and becomes the line leader for the day. You can make it extra special by providing a small party favor for each child in the class such as pencils, stickers, erasers, bouncy balls, etc. Please DO NOT send food.

Unbirthdays (birthdays falling during the months when school is not in session) may be celebrated on a day convenient to the teacher and the parent.

Invitations to private parties cannot be handed out in a classroom unless every child in that class is invited to the party.

Bulletin Board

There is a bulletin board located on the wall in the preschool hallway. Please check it for notices and sign-up sheets. We welcome your comments, suggestions, etc. All signed statements placed in the collection box will receive a reply.

Parent Involvement

The key to success of any quality program for your child is parent interest, and cooperation between home and school. There are many ways that you can be supportive of your child:

- Allow your child to share the day's experiences, perhaps at lunch or dinner.
- Display your child's artwork and give honest praise for his/her endeavors. Make special note of all improvements in mastering skills.
- Take time to do things with your child. Encourage letter and number recognition in everyday things, such as stores you regularly visit, license plates on cars around you, traffic signs, etc. Learning is ongoing and fun.
- Help your child attend school regularly, unless he/she is ill. Encourage participation in every event.
- See that your child gets sufficient sleep each night and begins the day with a good breakfast.
- See that your child knows his/her full name and age, and later (4-year-olds) his/her address and telephone number.
- Please notify the teacher if your child has experienced an upsetting situation; this gives the teacher insight into certain reactions.
- Volunteer to share your special talent or career training with the class when it is appropriate to the monthly theme. Our "Children Around the World" study is a wonderful time to share information on a country of national origin or heritage, or place of missionary work.
- Accompany your child on field trips whenever possible.
- After a cheerful "goodbye!" parents should walk the child to the cubby, then to the classroom door. There give the child a hug and a kiss and a word of praise and encouragement, and then promptly and confidently leave. Your confident attitude will help your child make a more rapid adjustment. Tell the child where you will be while he/she is in school and what time you will return for pick-up. Knowing your whereabouts and schedule is a great comfort. Remember to smile!
- Parents can visit the facility any time their child is in preschool without making an appointment. Please be advised the open door policy does not permit parents to remain in the preschool/church facility during preschool hours. Parents will have the opportunity to participate during special planned activities.

Assessments and Parent/Teacher Conferences

The Maryland State Department of Education encourages all early care education programs to conduct assessments through the Early Learning Assessment. Our preschool uses the ELA to conduct these assessments. This assessment measures the learning progress of young children in seven domains of learning -- social foundations, language/literacy, mathematics, physical well-being and motor development, science, social studies, and the fine arts.

There will be two scheduled conferences for each child during the school year. Please refer to the preschool calendar for specific conference dates. (Parents and/or teachers may schedule a conference at anytime for specific concerns.)

Discipline

The greatest deterrent to having to initiate disciplinary action with children is to create an environment of honest praise, unconditional love, and dedicated consistent care for them. We believe God has “called” us into these teaching positions, and has, therefore, enabled us to meet their needs through His loving guidance and authority. In preparation for this, we begin **each** class in staff prayer time, asking for sensitive spirits to meet the needs of each child and for the affirmation that we uphold the quiet, unshaken belief that we are to encourage a heart of the Spirit of God Himself in every child. (Galatians 5:22: “*The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*”) Our “discipline” is bringing this knowledge of God’s desire for these characteristics into every child’s life in every situation. We encourage the children to be safe, to be kind and to be good listeners.

If a difficulty arises during school hours we are committed to immediately intervene in a gentle but firm manner, articulating the problem in terms the child understands and sharing the Godly response to it. We then offer the opportunity to “**Do what Jesus would do.**” If harm has come to another and feelings are hurt, we include all those involved in a time of “child-sized” prayer that God heal the hurt and help us to be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32). Apologies and acceptance of those apologies is solicited. Then praise is given with verbal rejoicing at their good choice to obey God’s commandment and Jesus’ example.

If a negative choice is pursued, a second explanation and expectation of obedience is presented. The child is quietly led to a “Time-out” area to prayerfully reconsider his/her choice. After a minute or two, the teacher again outlines the choice at hand. It is very important for the child himself/herself to acknowledge their understanding that they are choosing to obey, therefore making the association that rewards and consequences are directly related to their actions.

Children in the age frame of 3 and 4 years old are tremendously social and curious. Separation from others is a highly successful disciplinary tool. In an environment when all their peers are joyfully participating in activities, the briefest alienation from this has consistently been effective in focusing the child on what is expected. It is important that the child know we are sharing the events with his/her parents, so that uniformity and cooperation is witnessed between parent and teacher.

We wish to note that it is the expectation that all students enrolled at Bethel Christian Preschool will follow the rules and regulations established by our preschool. If, therefore, it develops that a child obviously requires constant one-on-one time that cannot be met with a single teacher and aide or that a child is consistently not following the rules, we will take the following actions:

- Step 1: Have a conference with the child’s parent, teacher, and preschool director to discuss the situation.
- Step 2: If the situation continues, there will be a probationary time of evaluation. The length of time will depend on the circumstances.
- Step 3: At the end of the probationary time, it may be deemed necessary for the benefit of the child, to withdraw from the program. Please keep in mind this will be prayerfully considered.

Parents, please remember we are here to be “co-workers” with you in raising up God’s children. We so appreciate this greatest of responsibilities of nurturing children and bringing them up as Proverbs 22:6 would have us to do (“*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*”) We endeavor to be your greatest supporters.

Student Pickup

When picking up your child, please drive directly and cautiously around the parking lot to the front entrance of the church as not to be a distraction to the children who may be walking in from the playground. If you, or your regular carpool driver, are not picking up your child from school, a note will be required before your child will be released to a person that has not been designated on the emergency card. Proper ID will be required for anyone other than the parent or carpool driver to pick up your child even if listed on the emergency card. For those that carpool, please make sure the teacher has a list of children and drivers in your carpool.

Church Property

Parents must supervise their children before and after school on the playground to ensure safety. We are not responsible for your child before or after school hours. Smoking is not allowed on the church property, including the playground.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In compliance with the Maryland State Department of Education, Bethel Christian Preschool has developed a School Emergency Response Plan. It includes staff responsibilities in time of an emergency, a prearranged agreement with the YMCA located at 4331 Montgomery Road for the provision of an emergency shelter, and a portable emergency incident kit that which includes such items as first aid supplies, emergency blankets, AM/FM radio, batteries, and student emergency cards. Our preschool has plans in place so that the staff is prepared to respond in an appropriate manner for the safety of your children.

Class Schedules

AM Class

9:00-9:15
9:15-9:40
9:40-10:20
10:20-10:30
10:30-10:40
10:40-11:00
11:00-11:25
11:25-11:30
11:30

Extended Day

11:30-12:00
12:00-12:30
12:30-1:00
1:00

PM Class (if enrollment allows)

12:30-12:45 Greet Friends
12:45-1:10 Circle Time 1
1:10-1:50 Table Activities & Learning Centers
1:50-2:00 Circle Time 2 /Music & Movement
2:00-2:10 Bathroom Break
2:10-2:30 Prayer Time, Snack, & Quiet Book Time
2:30-2:55 Outside Time/Gross Motor Activities
2:55-3:00 Prepare to go home
3:00 Parent Pick-up

Lunch
Extended Learning Centers
Enrichment Learning/Activity
Parent Pick-up

