Teaching from the Heart

St. Luke's MMO and Preschool

Parent Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Welcome
-A Note to Parents, Our Purpose, Physical Facility

II. Staff Information
-Staff Qualifications

III. Daily School Information
-Daily Schedule, Dress, School Supplies, Snacks, Photos, Hours, Holidays and Closing, Items from Home

IV. Curriculum and Evaluation
-Student Evaluations, Curriculum

V. Discipline

VI. Health and Safety
-Child Abuse & Neglect, Medical Needs and Information, Illness, Injuries, No Weapons Policy

VII. Enrollment and Tuition
-Registration, Tuition, Returned Checks, Attendance, Withdrawal, Refunds, Potty Training Requirements

VIII. Parking Lot and Playground
-Car Pool/Pick-up, Parking Lot Safety, Playground and Front Lawn

IX. Extended Day (Lunch Bunch)

X. Birthdays Celebrations and School Parties
-School Parties, Birthday Celebrations, Approved Birthday Treats

XI. Additional Information for MMO (Mother's Morning Out: 12 to 24 months old)

I. WELCOME

A Note to Parents

The staff at St. Luke's Mother's Morning Out and Preschool is proud to have the opportunity to teach and take care of your child and pleased that you have selected us for your child's preschool experience. We have a very unique and exciting program with endless activities and learning experiences. We also have a genuine love for children of all ages and want only the best for them. Our goal is to help your child become a happy, well-adjusted, and secure individual.

Our school has met the Religiously Exempt requirements set forth by the Virginia Department of Social Services, ensuring that we have well-qualified staff members that have met certain academic and medical requirements as well as participating in the state criminal history record check. In addition, for your child's safety, our building has been inspected and approved by the Chesterfield County Fire Marshall and the Chesterfield County Department of Health. Our preschool carries public liability insurance as well.

The enrollment capacity of our building is 205 children. On any given day, we have no more than 120 children in the building.

Our program does not provide any food services. The children bring a snack from home each day.

This handbook was written for you. We hope it will answer many of your questions and give you the information you need to know about our program and staff. We look forward to a fun-filled year with you and your child. If you ever have any concerns or problems, please let us know.

Our Purpose

St. Luke's program offers your child the opportunity to grow and develop spiritually, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically within an atmosphere of love and learning.

A. SPIRITUAL:
   1. A special blessing is said before eating.
   2. All classes attend chapel time twice a month with the pastor.
   3. Bible stories read during library time.
   4. Celebrating religious holidays (Easter & Christmas).

B. SOCIAL:
   1. Developing a feeling of personal worth.
   2. Acquiring social skills which enable positive interaction.
   3. Demonstrating courtesy and kindness.
   4. Developing a love of learning.

C. EMOTIONAL:
   1. Learning to separate from parents and home.
   2. Learning values through sharing.
   3. Understanding the difference between individual and group.

4. Getting along with peers.

D. COGNITIVE:
1. Learning basic skills needed for school readiness.
2. Using observation skills to gain more information.
3. Using skills to solve problems.
4. Exploring cause and effect.

E. PHYSICAL:
1. Learning healthy habits.
2. Developing fine and gross motor skills.
3. Participating in recreational activities.
4. Learning about personal space.

Physical Facility

Main Floor……7250 Square Feet
5 classrooms, 3 church offices, Music room, Preschool office, Art room, Library, Pastor's office, Two sets of male and female hallway bathrooms, 2 classroom bathrooms, and the Sanctuary.

Basement……4000 Square Feet
5 Classrooms, One set of male and female hallway bathrooms, and the Recreation/Activity Area

Fellowship Hall…….2200 Square Feet

The Fellowship Hall is used for puppet shows, plays, and other enrichment activities. All classrooms and the basement recreation room are carpeted. The entire building is heated and air-conditioned. The outdoor playground is completely fenced in and contains heavy, sturdy wooden and plastic equipment with a safe gravel surface throughout the entire play area. The capacity of our building, determined by the architect, is 205.

St. Luke's MMO and Preschool contact information:
4101 Fordham Road
Richmond, Virginia, 23236
Phone: 804-276-8303/ Fax 804-276-5215
Michele Hart, Director: director@stlukespreschoolva.com
Website: www.stlukespreschoolva.com

II. STAFF INFORMATION

Staff Qualifications

Each member of our staff is qualified and experienced in working with preschool children of all ages. Many of our teachers are former teachers, child-care workers, or have earned an Early Childhood Certification from John Tyler Community College. The most important quality of each staff member is that they all LOVE children!!! All staff members are certified annually by a physician to be free from any disability that would prevent them from caring for children. In addition, each staff member has received a negative TB test. Each staff member has also participated in the State Police Criminal Record Check assuring that your child will be in safe, loving hands. Staff development is ongoing through conference attendance, workshops, and other trainings throughout the area.

III. DAILY SCHOOL INFORMATION

Daily Schedule

Creative Play: Children are free to play with toys of their choosing…books, blocks, puzzles, toys etc.
Direct Instruction: Children participate in daily learning activities and lessons with their teacher.
Group Activities: Large group experiences such as games, stories, finger plays, and circle time.
Recreation: Children have both indoor and outdoor playtime.
Snacks: Children are required to bring an individual snack from home to eat while at school.
Extra Resources: Each class has music with our music teacher and art with our art teacher. We also enjoy plays, puppet shows, and visits from other talented specialists and educators.

Dress

St. Luke's MMO and Preschool does not have a formal dress code. Please take into consideration that children may be painting or working with messy items during the school day and special clothing could be ruined. It is best to "dress for a mess". Children must wear tennis shoes or shoes with tennis shoe bottoms every day to school. Crocs, flip flops, boots, or sandals are not allowed. Children may be asked to sit out during recess if the shoes they are wearing are unsafe. Please label all clothing such as coats, sweaters, gloves, hats, etc. Items that we find with no name on it will be put in the lost and found box in the Preschool Office. PLEASE dress your child appropriately for the weather. The children will go outside to play if the temperature/wind chill is above 32°F.

School Supplies

Each family is asked to bring in the following items to be used in their child's classroom:

- 1 package of baby wipes
- 1 roll of paper towels
- 1 box of tissues
- And other supplies as specified by your child's teacher

Snacks

Children downstairs in our 3's, 4's, and JK program should bring a refillable sports/water bottle. Please label your child's water bottle with a permanent marker. Our 2's & 3's upstairs will be provided with a paper cup from which they will drink water during snack time. Our Mother's Morning Out (MMO)/Toddler students should bring an empty sippy cup, which will be filled with

water during the day. Parents are asked to send a nutritional snack in their child's backpack to be eaten during our morning snack break. Please label your child's snack to avoid confusion. If a snack is not appropriate, it will be returned to the back pack and an alternative snack will be offered to your child. Listed below are a few appropriate & inappropriate snacks for school.

Acceptable Snacks	Unacceptable Snacks
Crackers (all kinds)	Cheese Handi-Snacks (with red sticks)
Cereal (finger size)	Yogurt/Applesauce/ Pudding/ GOGURT
Cheese (all kinds)	Pop-top metal cans/plastic fruit cups
Bread sticks	Nuts and popcorn (under 3)
Sandwiches	Small flakey cereal
Fresh Fruit (peeled and cut)	Raisins (under 3)
Lunch meat	Cookies
Granola bars	Cupcakes
Fruit bars	Crumbly muffins
Pretzels	Marshmallows
Combos	Candy/Fruit Snacks/Fruit Roll-Ups
Teddy grahams	Little Debbie snack cakes (Twinkies, etc.)
Nabs (all kinds)	Pop-Tarts
Graham crackers	Chips- Doritos, Cheetos, Potato, etc.
Veggie (carrots & celery)	Donuts

WATER ONLY!!!! NO JUICE, MILK, OR OTHER DRINKS ARE ALLOWED!!!!

Photos

Periodically during the school year, we will be taking pictures of the children participating in daily and special activities. These pictures will be given to you either as a gift, placed in the classroom photo album, or posted on our website. If you do not want your child photographed, please inform your child's teacher and the Preschool Office on the first day of school!

Hours

School will be open from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM Monday through Thursday. You are always welcome to come and observe your child or to share something with his or her class. We ask that you please let us know in advance when you are planning to visit. The Director is also available during those hours to help you in any way. Teachers report to school at 9:00 AM and are preparing for their day. Please do not bring your child to school before 9:25 AM, at which time the doors will be unlocked to welcome your child for the day. Doors will be locked from 9:35–12:25. You must use the buzzer located at the carport entrance to enter the school building during these hours.

Holidays and Closings

St. Luke's MMO and Preschool will follow the Chesterfield County Public School system for all holidays and closings due to bad weather. School will close at 12:25 PM on days CCPS has an early release. These days will be marked on your child's monthly calendar. Please arrive promptly at 12:25 on these days because many of our teachers must leave quickly to get their own children from school. If Chesterfield County Public Schools open one hour late, we will also open one hour late (10:30 AM-1:30 PM). If CCPS open two hours late, we will also open two hours late (11:30 AM-2:00 PM). Please pack a lunch for your child on delayed-opening days. **Please check our school website at www.stlukespreschoolva.com for emergency closings or messages.**

Items from Home

Children are not allowed to bring toys, candy, or gum to school. To provide comfort during times of stress, the MMO children can bring a special item such as a LABELED blanket or stuffed animal to snuggle with as needed. Please **DO NOT** allow your child to bring any toy weapons (guns, swords, etc.) to school.

A backpack is required for transporting your child's belongings to and from school. Memos, schedules, newsletters, and important information will be sent home in backpacks, put in mailbox cubbies, or emailed to you. If you are sending us a note, tuition check, etc., please give it directly to your child's teacher. We **DO NOT** go through these backpacks every day. Please make sure that your child has a complete change of clothes in their backpack in case of an accident. Most children feel more comfortable and less embarrassed if they have their own clothing on! PLEASE LABEL YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK AND CHECK IT EVERY DAY!!

IV. CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION

Student Evaluations

Our 3s, 4s, and JK classes receive written evaluations in October and May. Parent conferences for our 3 year old students are held in April. Parent conferences for our 4 year old and Junior Kindergarten students are held in March. All students in our 4 year old and JK classes will participate in the Brigance Screening. Rising Kindergartners will also participate in this screening when they register for kindergarten. Please contact your child's teacher with any question or concerns regarding evaluations.

Curriculum

Daily lessons focus on specific skills and objectives that are appropriate for each age group. These skills and objectives will be given to you by your child's teacher in the beginning of the school year. Daily lessons are developed from thematic units about holidays, the four seasons, and special days (or weeks) of recognition such as dental health week, fire prevention week, etc. Other thematic units will be indicated on your child's monthly calendar. The 3 year old, 4 year old, and JK classes participate in letter study using the Handwriting Without Tears handwriting program and use Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Early Learning as their curriculum guide. These students also participate in Chapel twice a month with the church pastor. All classes visit the library, art room, and music room each week for special classes as well. Information about our curriculum is available on our website at www.stlukespreschoolva.com.

V. DISCIPLINE

Discipline is usually not a problem at St. Luke's MMO and Preschool. Behavioral problems are addressed through redirection, communicating clear expectations, and providing consistent consequences. If behavioral problems continue, children will take a time-out or sit in a "better choice" chair in their classroom. A typical time-out lasts about one minute per year of the child's age (ex: a 3 year old would sit for 3 minutes). If disruptive behavior continues, children will be sent to the Preschool Office and an Oops! Note will be sent home explaining what happened. Parents of students displaying chronic, disruptive behavior and/or aggression toward classmates or teachers will receive a phone call from either the teacher or the Director to discuss the situation. A Parent Conference may be necessary. We will make every effort to accommodate and include all types of children with many different needs within our staffing limits. Students demonstrating consistent and serious behavioral issues no longer manageable by our staff will be withdrawn from our school.

We use the widely recognized 1-2-3 Magic for Teachers program, developed by Dr. Thomas Phelan. It is a simple and proven method of dealing with challenging behaviors. We have both the 1-2-3 Magic for Parents and 1-2-3 Magic for Teachers books and DVDs in the Preschool office for your review.

VI. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Child Abuse and Neglect

All childcare providers in the State of Virginia are obligated to report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. If this situation should occur, the Director will notify the Child Protective Services Unit of the Department of Social Services.

Medical Needs and Information

St. Luke's Preschool is proud to have a tradition of welcoming children with special needs. Some children have easily discernible needs, such as hearing aids or leg braces. Some children have less visible needs, such as allergies to foods, the environment, or insect bites. St. Luke's MMO and Preschool will do everything possible to create and maintain a safe environment for all students. We are **NOT** equipped to handle life-threatening conditions. For this reason, we request that each parent determine if the normal, routine safety precautions used for all students are sufficient for their own child. For example, the classroom teacher may make every effort to comply with dietary restrictions, but toddlers and older children may "sneak food" or offered food by another student while the teacher is busy elsewhere. St. Luke's **CANNOT** and **WILL NOT** be held responsible for these incidents. There is a possibility that your child's classroom will be a peanut-free room. Your child's teacher will notify parents if this is the case. Please adhere to these restrictions. Similarly, environmental risks will be monitored to the best extent possible, but classrooms will not be changed to suit the needs of one child to the detriment of others. Any child with a serious allergy that requires emergency medication must have a signed MAT form on file specifying the severity and treatment of the allergy. **ST. LUKE'S PRESCHOOL, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL STAFF MEMBERS, WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES TO YOUR CHILD SO LONG AS ORDINARY CARE, PROVIDED TO ALL STUDENTS, IS PROVIDED. ****State Licensing requires us to have a current immunization form and a copy of the birth certificate on file for each child enrolled. Virginia Law also requires that each child have a signed Medical Release Form on file. This form is required for every child regardless of allergies or health issues.

Illness

Control of communicable illnesses among students is a major concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illnesses in our preschool have been developed with the help of the health department and local pediatricians. In order to protect all students and staff, as well as your own child, parents are required to keep sick children at home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

* Fever of over 100°F (Children must be fever-free for 24 hours BEFORE returning to school.)
* Uncontrollable coughing
* Diarrhea, vomiting, or an upset stomach
* Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache
* Thickened/colored discharge and/or drainage from eyes, nose, ears or wounds

Children who develop any of these symptoms (including diarrhea) will need to be picked up immediately. We appreciate your cooperation with this policy.

Injuries

We will inform parents of any injury occurring during the school day. Cuts and scrapes will be cleaned with soap and water and covered with a band aid when necessary. We will not remove splinters or foreign objects from ears, noses, etc.

No Weapons Policy

For the safety of the children, we respectfully ask that all parents or guardians including those in law enforcement please not bring any weapons into the preschool. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

No Smoking Policy

Please refrain from smoking during school hours on the property. Parents, caregivers, volunteers and staff members should understand that they cannot smoke on the school grounds, and they will need to leave the school grounds in order to smoke.

VII. ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

Registration

Registration for the upcoming school year begins in January. Registering at this time guarantees your child's spot and age-level enrollment. State regulation requires certain documents be collected during the registration process. A completed registration form, medical release form, registration fee, tuition contract, and birth certificate are required at the time of registration. Before your child can attend school, a copy of your child's current immunization records is required.

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first (1st) day of each month and NO LATER than the tenth (10th) day of each month. Tuition is collected a month in advance (ex: April's tuition is due March 1st). The last payment of the school year is due on April 1st for the month of May. If we have not received your payment BY the 10th of the month (even if the 10th is on a Saturday), you will be charged a late fee of $15.00 for EACH CHILD you have enrolled. If payments are late for a second time during the school year, you will be charged a $20 late fee per child. A third late payment during the school year will incur a $30 late fee per child. Failure to keep tuition current will lead to your child's immediate dismissal.

Families paying tuition monthly must sign up for automatic draft (ACH). There is a $12 annual fee for ACH. Families paying tuition annually or semi-annually may put their checks in the tuition box outside the preschool office. Please put your child's name on the check. Do not leave your check in the church's outdoor mailbox, as it may be picked up by the mailman by mistake. Please remember that tuition amounts remain the same each month regardless of how many days are missed due to snow closings, holidays, illnesses or other reasons not within our control. Families will be required to pay tuition for extended vacations in order to hold the child's space-no exceptions. Changes to your tuition contract can be made at any time by contacting the Preschool Treasurer, Shirley Gary.

Returned Check Policy

If your check is returned to us from the bank due to insufficient funds, you will be responsible for the original amount of the check plus a $15.00 returned check fee. If a second check is returned, you will be charged another $15.00 fee and all future payments must be made with cash, money order, cashier's check, or certified check.

Attendance

Attendance at St. Luke's MMO and Preschool is not compulsory. If your child is extremely unhappy and is unable to adjust, you have the right to withdraw your child. Conversely, the school also retains the right to dismiss any child who is unhappy or unable to conform to our program.

Withdrawal

A thirty (30) day written notice of withdrawal is required when withdrawing your child. If you withdraw after March 1, 2015, you will be required to pay the remaining three months. Special payment arrangements can be made with the Preschool Treasurer, Shirley Gary, if necessary.

Refunds

No refund or credit is given for missed days due to weather or illness. We will follow the decision of Chesterfield County Public Schools to add days to the school calendar if needed due to excessive weather closings. Also, as stated on your registration form, your registration fee is non-refundable.

Potty Training Requirements

Children entering the 3s, 4s, or JK program must be potty trained. We understand that children do have accidents. However, it becomes problematic when older children consistently have accidents because these classrooms are not equipped for diaper changing. Please make sure your child has gone to the bathroom before coming to school.

VIII. PARKING LOT AND PLAYGROUND

Carpool/Pick-up

Many of our parents and caretakers carpool to school. We maintain a list for each child of the people who are allowed to pick your child up from school. If someone other than a parent or approved person will be picking up your child, you must send in a written note or call the Preschool Office explaining the change.

PLEASE BE ON TIME. It is often upsetting to children when their "ride" is late dropping them off or picking them up. Teachers will begin their activities promptly at 9:35 AM and children will expect you at the door when it is opened at 12:25 PM. There is a late fee of $5.00 per minute for every minute past 12:40 PM during the regular school day and 2:10 PM during Extended Day. We understand at times there are extenuating circumstances that keep you from arriving on time. If you are going to be late, please notify the preschool office at 276-8303. It will be at the Director's discretion whether a late fee will be charged. Repeat occurrences are most likely to result in being charged a late fee.

Parking Lot Safety

Please park in designated parking spaces only. If you do not have white lines on each side of your car when you park, you are not in an approved parking space. Parking in spots designated for handicapped drivers is NOT ALLOWED. Parking in a handicapped spot (no matter how brief) requires a handicapped license plate or temporary tag. During arrival and dismissal there are many adults and children in the parking lot. Please ***drive slowly*** and carefully, following the white arrows when using the lower parking lot. Children CANNOT BE LEFT UNATTENDED in cars while you are in the building picking up or dropping off your preschooler. As we all know, it only takes a second for a tragedy to occur.

Playground and Front Lawn

If using the playground after dismissal time, parents need to supervise their children at all times. The Preschool is not responsible for any injuries that may occur after school is dismissed. Children over three years old are not permitted to play on the smaller playground and all rocks should remain on the ground and off the equipment. **Also, children must be kept out of the Memorial Garden on the front lawn and off the brick church sign.** Please leave the white rocks where they are. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

IX. EXTENDED DAYS (Lunch Bunch)

"Lunch Bunch" or extended days are offered to all students two years of age or older. During Lunch Bunch, children will have lunch and enjoy extra activities and playground time until 2 PM. On these days, the children need to bring a lunch in addition to their regular snack. The same appropriate snack guidelines apply to lunch (no Gogurt, yogurt, canned fruit, pudding, etc.) The children can drink water only with lunch. The fee for an extended day is $10. Extended Day sign-up forms are located outside the Preschool Office. Payment is due at the time of registration and must be received at least one day in advance. If your child is sick on an extended day that you have paid for, it is your responsibility to notify the office within 5 business days so that you will be credited for another extended day. This credit must be used within the next 30 days. Four year old classes will stay for 8 specific extended days beginning after spring break. The JK classes stay every Wednesday and Thursday until 2 PM. There is no additional fee for these extended days, as it is included in the monthly tuition for these classes. Please refer to the Extended Day Form outside the Preschool Office or check the dates on our website.

X. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AND SCHOOL PARTIES

School Parties

All holiday parties are celebrated in the classroom. Sign-up sheets will be posted outside your child's classroom for you to contribute items for these parties. Celebrations are held during your child's normal snack time. These parties include Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Other holidays may be celebrated in different ways by different age groups.

Birthday Celebrations

A child's birthday is a very important and exciting event that we enjoy celebrating! If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday during school, we ask that you bring one of the approved treats (listed below) to share with your child's class. **Please do not pass out personal invitations to your child's birthday party during school hours unless every child in the class is invited.**

Approved Birthday Treats

*Cookies (all types) *Fruit/Cheese *Rice Krispy Bars *Great Big Cookie

Your child's birthday is celebrated during regular snack time. Please bring the treat during morning drop off or bring it in during snack time. PLEASE DO NOT BRING FAVORS OR GOODY BAGS FOR THE CHILDREN. Special drinks, ice cream, cupcakes, and/or cakes are not allowed by the church. Due to food allergies, we ask that all treats be store-bought items.

XI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR MMO (Mother's Morning Out) STUDENTS

1. A change of clothing for your child.
2. Disposable diapers.
3. Name tags on bags, cups, snacks, stuffed animals, blankets, clothing, etc.
4. Please make sure your child's snack is one that can be eaten independently.
5. MMO children are free to bring a special stuffed animal, blanket, or favorite object from home to help with adjusting to being away from parents.
6. Please have your child wear a pull-up (or other training pants) until your child is COMPLETELY potty trained. Accidents can cause staining on the carpet.
7. Laxatives should not be given in the morning before coming to school. Please wait until after school.
8. In the fall, MMO children need extra time to adjust before parents begin visiting in the classroom. Please talk with your child's teacher regarding coming in for a visit.
7. Properly-fitting tennis shoes are needed every day for your child's play inside and outside of the building.
8. Teachers should know of any medications given, prescription and/or over the counter.

(Updated 7/2014)