



MESSIAH

LUTHERAN SCHOOL

EARLY CHILDHOOD HANDBOOK

2020-2021



Dear Family,

We wish to extend a warm welcome to you and your family! We plan to make this school year a positive experience for you and your child. It is our hope and prayer that God will bless your child's experience here at Messiah Lutheran School.

We view our program as a Christian outreach to children and families. You have been, and continue to be, your child's first and most important teacher. Our intent is to support, encourage, and provide opportunities that continue the educational and spiritual development already started by you – the parent! We provide an environment where young children can explore and learn about Jesus, themselves, others, and the world around them – all in an atmosphere of Christian love and acceptance.

Your involvement in your child's classroom experience is important. Please feel free to talk with your child's teacher or director at any time. We are here to listen, help, and encourage.

Again, THANK YOU for being a part of our school family!

Blessings,

Mrs. Sarah Kelly
Early Childhood Director
Phone: 636-329-1096 ext. 1004
Email: skelly@mlslions.org

Early Childhood Faculty and Staff

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher any time you have a question, concern, or fun story to share! We do not have landline telephones in the classroom, so many teachers will contact you via their cell phone, or via email.

School Office Phone: 636-329-1096

Website: www.mslions.org

Teacher Contacts

Sarah Kelly, Preschool Plus Teacher & Early Childhood Director
skelly@mslions.org

Diane Porter, Early Preschool Teacher
dporter@mslions.org

Stephanie Bohn, Preschool Teacher
sbohn@mslions.org

Mary Schlie, Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
mschlie@mslions.org

Beth Thaemert, Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
bthaemert@mslions.org

Absences and Tardies

Regular attendance is vital to a student's educational progress. Parents are encouraged to limit vacations, medical/dental appointments, and any other unnecessary absences that impact regular school attendance. If absences are planned, please notify the student's teacher. If your child is ill and not able to attend, please notify your child's teacher or the school office.

Admission Policy

Children entering Early Preschool must be 2 by August 1. Children entering Preschool must be 3 by August 1 and potty-trained. Children entering Pre-Kindergarten must be 4 by August 1 and potty-trained. For Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten, Pull-ups and diapers are not allowed. Contact the director or school office for complete admissions information. A non-refundable deposit is required to secure a spot in the program.

Arrival and Departure

Due to Covid-19, plans for Arrival and Departure will be shared on a timely basis and updated to reflect current recommendations by the St. Charles County Health Department and the CDC.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate our students and their special day. Due to Covid-19, parents and guardians may no longer send in birthday treats.

Brightwheel

To enhance communication with parents, we use Brightwheel, a tool that significantly helps teachers manage their classrooms, observe and track the children, communicate with you, and share photos and videos. Parents also may also use this to communicate to the staff in their child's classroom.

Church Information

Messiah Lutheran School is owned and operated by Messiah Lutheran Church. We are a Christian school serving the entire community. Families are always welcome to worship at Messiah! Check with the director, your child's teacher, or the Office for specific worship times and opportunities.

Classes Offered

Messiah offers Early Preschool for children that are 2 by August 1. Messiah Lutheran School offers early childhood program classes for children ages 3-5. Children must be 3 by August 1 to attend Preschool, and 4 by August 1 to attend Pre-Kindergarten. Students must be 5 by August 1 to attend Kindergarten at Messiah Lutheran.

Clothing and Dress Code

When helping your child choose clothing for the day, make sure the clothes are comfortable and free of complicated buttons, snaps, and zippers. Play-clothes and tennis shoes are most appropriate for school. Socks are necessary. When we paint or do other art projects, we will do our best to keep your child clean, but paint spots are typical. The paints we use are washable. No flip-flops or crocs are allowed, as all shoes must have a secure backing. School policy also prohibits boys from wearing earrings. Please supply an extra set of clothes in your child's backpack in case of accidents or other spills. If your child uses a piece of the extra set of clothing, be sure to immediately replace it. Also, check the clothes with the changing of the seasons.

Communication with Families

Teacher communication with families is very important. Be sure to provide teachers with valid email addresses and phone numbers. Teachers will typically send home weekly printed newsletters, but also a variety of regular emails. Newsletters will typically be posted on the school website. Feel free to contact your child's teacher at any time. We are here to partner with you!

Conferences

A required Parent/Teacher Conference will be held each fall, after the end of the 1st quarter. Preschool and Pre-kindergarten students will receive a quarterly Progress Report. Conferences at any other period of the school year may be requested by either the director, teacher, or parent. Progress Reports will be returned to the teacher at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters. At the end of the school year, the Progress Report will be yours to keep.

Discipline

Many of you are aware that the word “discipline” means “to teach.” Teachers do their best to try and prevent problems from arising in the classroom. Whether a problem arises with a teacher or another student, there is always an opportunity for learning. We “discipline” by modeling correct behavior and dialoguing with children when situations arise. Behavioral expectations are shared regularly with all students and are very age-appropriate. We utilize a developmentally appropriate strategy of “Love and Logic” principles for discipline. Be sure to check with your child’s teacher or the early childhood director should you have any questions or concerns.

Emergencies and Lock-Down Plans

Messiah Lutheran School is a secure-entrance building. Main doors are only open during specific times. Please honor these times and the safety of all when dropping off and picking up your child. Should you need to arrive at a time not in the “window” of typical open-door times, please use the main school entrance where the school office can buzz you in.

Proper safety procedures are in place for special emergencies. Regular review of such procedures takes place, as well as specific practice drills with students.

Extended Care

An Extended Care Program is available to all families. This service is additional to a child’s enrollment and may be used on an as-needed basis. Rates are determined annually. Families who are pre-enrolled for Extended Care will be given a security code for entering the building. Extended Care is staffed by some early childhood staff, as well as other screened personnel.

Field Trips

Field Trips are important aspects of a child’s education. Field trips are connected to specific learning currently happening in a classroom. For our Preschool classrooms, many field trips actually come to the classroom.

Fire Drills

Practice fire drills are held regularly throughout the school year. Teachers practice these with students so they know what to expect during such times.

Head Lice

A child found to have head lice will be sent home from school. Treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or one prescribed by a doctor must be completed before they will be readmitted to school. The child may be reexamined and a significant reduction of head lice needs to be noted before they are allowed to return to the classroom.

Health

This section has been updated to reflect Messiah’s Back to School Plan with recommendations for Covid-19

PLEASE NOTE: *The importance of keeping sick children home can not be emphasized enough.*

Each staff member and student/parent will be asked to screen themselves at home for:

- Temperature check (should be below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle/body aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste/smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion/ runny nose
- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea

Students/Staff members will be screened upon arrival before entering the building.

● **If any student or staff member has symptoms, they should stay home and call their healthcare provider for guidance.** The individual should not be allowed to enter the building for 72 hours after the symptoms subside and without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Managing Symptomatic Staff/Students During School Hours

1. As soon as symptoms are identified in a student or staff member, the individual should be separated from others in the building and should leave the building as soon as possible. If a student or staff member cannot leave immediately, they should be directed to an isolation area. The school should begin making a 'contact trace list' of all possible exposures to the symptomatic case as soon as they become aware of the symptomatic individual. This list would include anyone within 6 feet from the individual for at least 15 minutes. The county health department will ask the school representatives for this list to begin their own contact tracing.
2. Follow-up with the symptomatic individual to make sure a plan for testing is in place.
3. Contact the St. Charles County Department of Public Health to inform them of the possible case and prepare for follow-up.

St. Charles County COVID-19 Hotline 636-949-1899

● **The COVID-positive student or staff member is able to return to school when they**

satisfy the [recommendations of the CDC](#). A return letter from a health care provider or health department should be sent upon return to school.

- **A student or staff member who has had close contact with a COVID-positive person is able to return to school when they satisfy the [recommendations of the CDC](#).** A return letter from a health care provider or health department should be sent upon return to school.

Please note: To minimize exposure to potentially sick individuals, we will be limiting visits to our building. Visitors and parents will not be brought into the building unless it is an emergency. Any visitor will be screened, including temperature check, and required to wear a mask.

**Should I send my child to school?
(Department of Human Services)**

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| Fever | Normal temperature w/o medication for 24 hours |
| Diarrhea/Vomiting | Follow recommendations stated above to satisfy recommendations of the CDC |
| Chicken Pox | 6 days after last crop of blisters |
| Common Cold/Flu | Follow recommendations stated above to satisfy recommendations of the CDC |
| Giardia | Written release by physician |
| Head Lice/ nits | After treatment and no sign of nits (see Head Lice) |
| Impetigo | Written release by physician |
| Infection Hepatitis | Written release by physician |
| Meningitis | Written release by physician |
| Pink eye (bacterial conjunctivitis) | Written release by physician |
| Poliomyeliti | Written release by physician |
| Rubella (German Measles) | Written release by physician |
| Streptococcal infections (Scarlet Fever) | Written release by physician |
| Viral Hepatitis | Written release by physician |

Injuries

Minor injuries will be cared for by the teacher and teacher aides. Ice packs, soap and water, and band-aids will be the extent of first-aid given. Such injuries will be shared with you when your child is picked up from school or via the Brightwheel app.

All parents are required to complete emergency contact information in RenWeb. In cases of accident or injury, every effort will be made to reach the parent. In the event the

parent or designated individual cannot be reached, emergency medical treatment will be sought at the discretion of the teacher.

Insurance

Messiah Lutheran School does not provide accident insurance for your child while he/she is attending our program. Any medical claims must be first filed with your own family health or accident insurance company.

Lunches from Home

Children have the option to bring their lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. Lunch should be brought when students arrive in the morning. Lunch boxes can be placed by his/her cubby. Be sure to include a drink for your child too. Water may be available. All utensils should be supplied from home. There is no refrigeration for lunches, so ice packs come in handy. Be sure to provide your child with food items that are easy to open. Teachers certainly do provide assistance, but children should make their own efforts first.

School Lunch

Lunches will be offered five days a week by Food Service Consultants (FSC), a local company that operates the cafeterias at over 65 private schools in the St. Louis area, as well as a number of other businesses. Preschool children have a separate menu with items selected for their age. School lunch can be ordered for your child before school during Extended Care or classroom check-in. If a child does not have a lunch, a school lunch will be ordered for him/her.

Lunch Payment

Parents can use RenWeb to check lunch balances and add money to the account. There is one lunch account per family. You can check your itemized lunch bill via the RenWeb site. It will show which student purchased each item. Login to RenWeb here: <https://ml-mo.client.renweb.com/pw/> or Get the RenWeb Home App via the buttons below.



Medication

Teachers are not able to administer any medications to students. Should your child need medicine during the day, it can be administered via the school office with special notification from a doctor.

Naps/Rest Time

All students are given the opportunity for a daily afternoon nap or rest time. Children are not required to sleep, but they must remain quiet so as not to disrupt those children who are sleeping. Teachers may vary the length of nap and rest times based on the needs of the class, or for other reasons deemed necessary. Nap cots are provided. Children who stay all day should supply a small pillow and blanket, which can be kept in either a school cubby or cloth bag. Teachers will have more details on their specific Nap/Rest Time procedures.

Outdoor Recess

Whenever possible, students will have the opportunity to attend recess outdoors. Outdoor play time is essential for a child's development. Large and fine motor opportunities exist during these outdoor recess times. Specific rules and expectations are shared with students and must be followed for safety reasons. Play guns and play weapons will not be permitted for any reason during recess times.

Photos

Pictures of students may be used on occasions for school and church communications and/or marketing purposes. If you do not wish your child to have his/her picture included in these instances, please mark the appropriate box on the Student Enrollment Form, or notify the school office.

Secure Entrance

Messiah Lutheran School is a secure-entrance facility. For safety and security reasons, all doors are locked throughout the day. Doors are open for a specified amount of time for morning drop-off, mid-day pick-up, and end-of-the-day pick-up. Persons arriving at school during other times may need to come to The Timbers entrance and buzz in via the school office.

Snacks

Mid-day snacks for children are provided and included as part of your annual tuition. Water or juice is provided during snack times as well.

Supplies

Students receive a basic school supply list each summer. These items are to be brought to school before the first day of classes, often during individual family visits with the classroom teacher. Please bring only the items listed. All other supplies are furnished.

Teachers and Staff

We are very pleased to have such wonderful, qualified teachers on our staff. We strive to have educators trained in early childhood and/or elementary education, as well as those who are synodically-trained through the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. All teachers meet expectations set before them by Messiah Lutheran School. Classroom aides are also highly qualified individuals. Professional development and updated training is an ongoing process for all teachers and staff.

Toileting

For our Early Preschool/2's students, diaper changing and toilet training is an ongoing process and is done as needed throughout the day. It is important that both teachers and parents work closely so a consistent routine is established. Per sanitation requirements, accidents in underwear need to be kept at a minimum. If a child has more than an occasional accident, Pull-Ups will be required. We ask that you begin toilet training at home during the weekend or days off of school before bringing the child to the center as

a new trainee. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family.

Parents need to supply Pull-Ups, flushable wipes, and a couple of extra outfits including socks and shoes. Children should be dressed in “user friendly” clothing as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists or dresses. Try to avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps or zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove in a hurry and/or independently.

Children enrolled in our Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten program are required to be able to toilet independently when school starts. If the child is not toilet-trained, we may give a 2-week grace-period of trying to remind the child to use the restroom throughout the day. Children should wear underwear. No Pull-ups or diapers are allowed. Children should keep an extra set of clean clothes in his/her backpack should an accident occur. If the teacher/director believes the child is trained or at least making progress at the end of the 2 weeks, he/she may stay enrolled in the program. If the child is not making any progress, he/she may need to stop attending until fully toilet-trained. Should this happen, tuition charges will not occur during this period.

Toys From Home

We discourage bringing toys from home to school, unless it is for something specific that the teacher has allowed. Personal toys from home may cause sharing problems with other children and may become lost or broken. The early childhood staff cannot be responsible for these toys

As a quality early childhood program, we have our own toys and materials for the children to use. These materials have been carefully chosen for the age-level and curricular experiences of the children.

Tuition

Tuition is charged based on the enrollment option chosen by the family. Tuition is due monthly and is collected via bank drafts. Messiah Lutheran School partners with FACTS/RenWeb to administer tuition payments. If you ever have a question related to tuition and/or payments, be sure to contact the School Office.

Weather-Related Closings

School closings (typically weather-related) will be announced on local TV stations: (2 – FOX), (4 – CBS), and (5 – NBC). Be sure to look for MESSIAH – WELDON SPRING. Decisions made by the Francis-Howell School District and other St. Charles County area Lutheran schools may affect Messiah’s decision to cancel, but not always. A School-Reach phone call to all families may also be used, as well as email communications. Rarely will Messiah close during the school day, however parents are encouraged to use their own judgement when inclement weather does happen.