

PARENT HANDBOOK



A Christian-Based Developmental Program

Judy Phillips
Director

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7434 Bath Street
Springfield, VA 22150
Preschool: (703) 451-3314
Church Office: (703) 451-2900
www.gracepresby.org

GRACE WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL
HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 2021-2022

| | |
|----------------|---|
| October 11 | Indigenous People Day |
| November 1-2 | Student Holidays (FCPS Closed) |
| Nov. 24-26 | Thanksgiving Holiday |
| Dec. 20-31 | Christmas Vacation (classes resume on Jan. 3) |
| January 17 | Martin Luther King's Birthday |
| January 21& 24 | Student Holiday (FCPS Closed) |
| February 21 | Presidents' Day |
| March 4 | Student Holiday (FCPS closed) |
| April 1-8 | Spring Vacation |
| April 15 | GWP Closed, Good Friday* |

Preschool begins on Tuesday, September 7*.
The last day of preschool will be Friday, May 27.

***Please Note:** These dates vary from the FCPS Calendar.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

FCPS will make a decision by 6 a.m. regarding school closings due to inclement weather, and will inform radio and television stations. It will also be posted on T.V. Cable Channel 21, the FCPS station. **When Fairfax County Schools are closed, our school will be closed. When Fairfax County Schools open one or two hours late, our school will open at 11:00 a.m. and will close at 1:00 p.m. On these days, in lieu of sending in a snack, please send in a small lunch for your child.**

*****WE DO NOT MAKE UP SNOW DAYS*****

GRACE WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL

Grace Presbyterian Church
7434 Bath Street
Springfield, Virginia 22150
(703) 451-3314 (preschool)
(703) 451-2900 (church)

SECTION 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission Statement

Grace Weekday Preschool is an outreach ministry of Grace Presbyterian Church to families of the church congregation and the surrounding community. Our primary focus is to foster the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth in young children. Recognizing that growth occurs in individual ways, every effort is made to ensure each child's development of a positive self-image and an awareness of his/her own uniqueness as one of God's children. While children of all faiths and cultures are welcome, Grace Weekday Preschool emphasizes Christian faith and values.

Organization

Established in 1956, Grace Weekday Preschool is a non-profit school and part of the education ministry of Grace Presbyterian Church. Grace Weekday Preschool admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. The school operates under the guidance of the Grace Weekday Preschool Committee, which is composed of volunteer members from the church, as well as a parent and teacher representative. The committee oversees, guides, and supports the staff, curriculum, and students. All teachers of the school are experienced in preschool education and/or have a degree/credentials from an accredited college or university. Teachers participate in annual continuing education classes. Our teachers are loving, nurturing, and dedicated to the safety and well-being of each child.

Class Placement

The school reserves the right to move a child into another class when it would be beneficial to the child.

Tuition

Please pay by check, payable to **Grace Weekday Preschool**. *Tuition is an annual fee and may be paid in nine (9) equal monthly installments or all at once. Tuition is not determined by holidays, snow days, or a child's attendance.* The last month's payment (May) is due in advance of the school year and is non-refundable. Exceptions will be made for military families with a 30-day notice and copies of orders. Tuition is due on your child's first day of school each month. **A late payment fee of \$25.00 will be applied if payment is received after the 10th of the month.** Refunds for tuition will not be made because of ordinary illnesses, holidays, or vacations. Unusual or emergency cases are given every consideration.

Withdrawal Policy

The preschool and/or the parents reserve the right to withdraw a child from the program when it is in the best interest of the child or the preschool. All fees are non-refundable.

Required Documents

A copy of your child's birth certificate is required. Also, a completed Commonwealth of Virginia Health Form, signed by your child's physician, must be on file for each child. *It is the policy of GWP that all children have age-appropriate immunizations.* As your child's immunizations are updated, a copy of that immunization record, signed by the physician, can be attached to the health form. **Children will not be allowed to attend school until the health form has been submitted and birth certificate is on file.**

If your child requires the use of an Epi-Pen or inhaler and you wish these medications to be kept in the Preschool Office, you must complete a required form and have your pediatrician sign it before we can accept the medication.

Transportation

The school does not provide transportation, except for field trips taken as part of our program (see Field Trip section below). A list of children enrolled in our preschool will be provided to assist parents in forming car pools.

Field Trips**

Off-site field trips are offered to 4-year-old classes only. Transportation will be provided by licensed, insured parent drivers, and participation by the child is at the discretion of each parent. **A field trip authorization signed by the parent is required for each child attending an off-site field trip. Additionally, your child's car seat MUST be dropped off with your child the morning of the field trip so that it can be used when transporting your child.** If permission by the parent is denied, your child will be unable to attend school that day, as we do not have extra staff on hand to care for children not in their regular class.

****Field Trips are temporarily suspended due to COVID-19.**

Parent Participation**

The staff of Grace Weekday Preschool values parental support and involvement in your child's education. Parents are encouraged to participate in the classrooms by invitation of the staff to assist in various activities. This varies by age level and teacher. It is requested that younger children not accompany you during classroom time.

Parent volunteers are needed to support the school program in many ways. Opportunities are available throughout the school year. A parent meeting is held once a month to discuss both parental and preschool issues, and to promote communication between school and family. Parents are encouraged, but not required, to participate.

****Parent participation in-house is temporarily suspended due to COVID-19.**

Inclement Weather Policy

FCPS will make a decision by 6 a.m. regarding school closings due to inclement weather and will inform radio and television stations. It will also be posted on T.V. Cable Channel 21, the FCPS station. When Fairfax County Schools are closed, our school will be closed. When Fairfax County Schools open one or two hours late, our school will open at 11:00 a.m. and will close at 1:00 p.m. You will be called by 9:00 a.m. if we deviate from the above policy.

If school has opened for the day and changing weather conditions warrant an early dismissal, you will be called to pick up your child at an earlier time than the regular dismissal time of 12:30 p.m. ***It is imperative that we have current emergency numbers to reach you if necessary.***

We do not make up days lost to snow or other emergencies.

Please Note: In accordance with Grace Presbyterian Church's snow removal plan, the main preschool entrance (on Grace Street) will be cleared/salted for the safe arrival of students. The back stairs (near the Bath Street parking lot) may not be cleared in time for students' arrival. Parents need to park accordingly.

Illnesses/Emergencies

Due to COVID -19 we are taking extra precautions with our students and staff. Parents are required to check the daily health questionnaire in the morning before bringing your child to school. **See Addendum A.** You will be asked at the door upon arrival if your child has presented any symptoms. The answer must be "no" to all questions in order for your child to attend school that day. Any symptoms checked "yes" will require a doctor's note before the child may return to school. **See Addendum B.**

Both forms are available on our website for you to access when needed.

If a child becomes ill or injured at school, the parent will be contacted immediately; if the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be notified. ***It is imperative that the school have current home, work, and emergency contact numbers.*** If the situation warrants immediate medical attention, the 911 emergency number will be called and appropriate action taken.

Parents must notify the school if their child develops a contagious disease/condition (including, but not limited to: any symptoms related to COVID-19 such as common cold symptoms, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, mononucleosis, ring-worm, impetigo, flu, or head lice). Regarding head lice, GWP has a "no-nit" policy and your child must not have any visible signs of lice in order to return to school.

If antibiotics are prescribed, your child must be on the medication and be symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours before

returning to school. In ALL cases it is required that a doctor determines if the child's symptoms warrant a COVID-19 test, and a note from the doctor saying that the child may return to school is required.

A child with a fever, sore throat, stomach-ache, vomiting, and/or diarrhea is NOT allowed to attend school until he/she is free from the above symptoms for a minimum period of 24 hours. We appreciate a phone call or email when your child is ill, informing us of his/her absence, as we do track illnesses within our school.

The well-being of each child is a priority for the staff and director. If the director feels it is in the best interest of the child, as well as his/her classmates and teachers, that he/she be sent home due to illness, a parent will be notified and requested to pick up the child at that time. Conditions which may warrant a phone call include the child's physical comfort level, lack of concentration, lethargy, or heavy nasal discharge and the inability to take care of physical needs associated with the common cold.

***Please note that outdoor play is part of our daily activity. Children with seasonal allergies or other concerns should not come to school unless they can participate in outdoor activities with their class.** We do not have extra staff to stay with children who are separated from their class.

COVID-19 Clause If a child or teacher tests positive for Covid-19, that class will have to quarantine at home for 14 days. Refunds will not be given for that period. If any person in the same household of a child or teacher tests positive for COVID-19, that child or teacher will have to quarantine for 14 days. Refunds will not be given. In the event that school is closed by a governing authority, no refund will be given for that current month.

Snacks

Please send a small finger-food snack (dry snacks only) from home and a thermos of water with your child each school day. All containers should be labeled with your child's name. Please send in a towel for your child to sit on during snack time, and make sure the towel is labeled. The towel will be sent home with your child each day to be washed and returned on the next scheduled school day. For the safety of all children, **GWP adheres to a strict no-nut policy.** Please keep this in mind when you are preparing/purchasing treats to send in for snack, birthdays or special events.

Extended-Day Opportunities

Temporarily suspended due to COVID-19. We are hopeful that we can provide this opportunity at the 4-year-old level later this fall.

Dress

Please dress your child in casual, comfortable clothing. We enjoy getting messy! Tennis shoes are best for active play and for climbing on the outdoor equipment. The mulch on the playground is especially uncomfortable for children wearing sandals. The children play outside every day, weather permitting. Please make sure your child dresses appropriately for the weather, and that his/her name is on each outer garment.

Please provide your child with an easy-opening book bag, clearly labeled with his/her name, to carry home artwork, papers, and notices. Be sure to check your child's bag each day.

Diapers and wipes must be provided for children in the 2-day class who are not toilet-trained. All other children must be toilet-trained prior to entering school and, therefore, should not come to school in diapers.

Communication

You can reach the director or your child's teacher by calling the school at 703-451-3314, or sending an email to the preschool. After hours, your call will be taken by an answering machine and messages will be retrieved by the director.

You will receive a monthly newsletter from the director which will inform you of school-wide events and notices. Other newsletters regarding your child's class will be sent from the classroom teacher, either weekly or monthly. Bulletin boards in the hallway, as well as our website, will serve as reminders for school-wide events.

Parent Orientation and Open House have been changed this year due to COVID-19. A scheduled private Meet & Greet will be arranged by your child's teacher for you and your child to attend the week prior to school opening.

Conferences are held on an as-needed basis for any child throughout the school year. Written evaluations will be sent home mid-year for all 3- and 4-year-old students and for all students in May.

School Hours

School begins at 9:30 a.m. Please do not arrive prior to 9:30 a.m., as teachers are busy preparing for the day. It is important that children arrive on time each morning to establish a sense of routine and begin their day with the rest of their class. **Dismissal is at 12:30 p.m.** Please remember that it can be very distressing to some children to be the last one picked up. If you are running late, kindly give us a call so we may inform your child you are on your way. If a parent is habitually late picking up his/her child, late fees of \$1/minute will be assessed.

Our arrival and dismissal procedures have changed due to COVID-19. Each class will be assigned an outside entrance to the preschool for use at arrival and dismissal. Your child's classroom teacher will show you which entrance to use at your Meet & Greet prior to the start of school.

If your child is to go home with anyone other than the regular, designated person, you must give us written permission. All persons who are unknown to staff will be asked to show a picture I.D. before your child is released to them.

SECTION II CURRICULUM

Grace Weekday Preschool is a Christian-based developmental program. We use developmentally appropriate units of study and activities to arouse curiosity and create wonder in a natural and playful environment. Christian values are modeled through weekly Chapel lessons and daily interactions with students. Each day provides opportunities for both teacher-guided and child-initiated activities. During our daily center rotations, children freely explore the resources in each room. Teachers assist children as needed to facilitate learning. Please see an example of a typical daily schedule in Section III.

SECTION III A DAY AT PRESCHOOL

Consistency is important in a child's daily schedule. Young children find comfort in following a predictable routine. Consistency does not, however, preclude flexibility or spontaneity. Each teacher has the flexibility to make changes according to children's needs and interests. Time is allowed within each day for teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, as well as individual or large group activities.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 9:30 | Doors Open |
| 9:30 – 11:00 | Classroom Activities: Morning Work Circle/Story Time Snack Music (designated days) |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | Playground/Center Rotation <i>or</i> Center Rotation/Playground |
| 12:30 | Dismissal |

Chapel: Conducted in the church sanctuary by one of the pastors or the director for our 3- and 4-year-olds. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, each class will rotate in the sanctuary once a month so classes do not co-mingle. Chapel lessons will be conducted in the classrooms as well.

Music: Two or three times a week, depending on the number of days enrolled.

Cooking: Offered periodically by your child's classroom teacher.

For a complete description of our learning centers, please visit our website at www.gracepresby.org; click on preschool.

SECTION IV DISCIPLINE

Our goal at Grace Weekday Preschool is to develop the whole child and to instill in each child the knowledge that he/she is loved by God. The preschool recognizes that children are developing confidence and self-control. We create an atmosphere in which each child is respected and encouraged to show respect toward others. Redirection is used to guide the child back to appropriate behavior. Should attempts at redirection fail, time away from the group provides an opportunity for the child to calm down, think about his/her actions, and discuss with the teacher ways to change inappropriate behavior. For persistent inappropriate behavior, at the discretion of the director and the child's teacher, parents will be advised of the situation and encouraged to work with the child to provide consistent and positive guidance. If all attempts fail to correct the behavior, the director reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment.

Of primary importance at Grace Weekday Preschool is the safety of each of our students. We, therefore, take very seriously any injury to a child that is intentionally inflicted by another child (for example, biting). In such an event, the child who inflicted the injury will be separated from the class and given a warning from the teacher and the parents will be notified. In the case of a second incident, the parent will be called and asked to pick up the child immediately, and a conference will be scheduled. If a third incident occurs, you may be asked to remove your child from the school permanently.

SECTION V VIRGINIA CODE OF COMPLIANCE

Grace Weekday Preschool, as a church-sponsored center, is exempt from state licensure. However, our school must file certain documentation with the Department of Social Services and must meet additional requirements as indicated in Code of Virginia 63.2-1716.

Documentation includes annual Health Department report of sanitary inspection, fire inspection report, staff health reports by a practicing physician, fingerprinting/criminal history record checks on staff, and verification of staff/child ratios. Grace Weekday Preschool has an enrollment capacity of 75 students.

Additionally, Grace Weekday Preschool staff are certified in child CPR/First Aid and complete workshops on daily health screening and recognizing child abuse. As a religiously exempt preschool, we are subject to unannounced inspections by the Department of Social Services.

Our school is covered under Grace Church's public liability insurance.

Ten rooms on the lower level of Grace Presbyterian Church are used for the preschool. The Family Room and a kitchen are located on the lower level near preschool classrooms and also are available for use by the preschool as needed. This kitchen is used by staff for cooking units connected to lesson plans. GWP does not provide lunch to its students. Wester Hall, located immediately above the preschool, is available for indoor gross motor on inclement weather days. We use the sanctuary for Chapel.

All children must have the Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Physical Examination and Immunization Certification form on file in the school, as well as a copy of his/her birth certificate.

SECTION VI FIRE DRILL AND EMERGENCY POLICY

Grace Weekday Preschool practices monthly fire drills, in accordance with guidelines established by the Fire Marshal. Teachers also practice evacuation drills (without students) for emergencies other than fire related.

Grace Weekday Preschool has created a plan which, we believe, will keep our children safe in the event of an emergency. An emergency can be related to the weather, a facility failure (gas leak or electrical outage), or man-made (such as a terrorist or sniper attack). *In the event of any type of emergency, our first priority will be to ensure the safety of the children under the care of Grace Weekday Preschool.*

Two policies have been developed for two different types of emergencies:

General Lock-Down Policy -- defined as a situation requiring increased security, but not necessitating keeping the children in the building beyond normal preschool hours.

Extended Lock-Down Policy -- defined as a situation that necessitates keeping the children under secure conditions for up to 24 hours.

Please note that the plans have been designed to provide the highest level of safety for your children and the members of our staff who care for your children. The plans are also intended to keep you safe, by assuring you that, in the event of an extreme emergency, your children will be cared for and you will not have to fear for their safety. We are just as concerned about protecting you as we are about protecting your children. As you read through these plans, please keep in mind that they were not devised to separate you and your child but, rather, to protect both you and your child until such time as the family can be safely reunited.

General Lock-Down Policy

In the event that Fairfax County operates in a lock-down mode at any time during preschool hours, the preschool will follow suit. Lock-down

mode requires all doors to be locked so that no one may enter or exit the building. The preschool will allow entrance and exit only for parents, persons who have established business in the church, or expected visitors. All persons must go to the front doors of the church and ring the doorbell. Please be aware that you could be asked to show your ID through the window before entering. Additionally, playground time and all outside activities will be cancelled during a lock-down period.

If a General Lock-Down Policy is in effect, signs will be posted on the church and school doors. Fairfax County Public Schools will communicate through its emergency messaging system. Radio and television stations (including FCPS Cable Channel 21) will be informed, and you can access the website, www.fcps.edu, for information. Please be prepared and aware of this policy as there may not be advanced warning.

When a lock down is in place or an unexpected event in our area causes massive congestion on our roads, please have a plan in place and a contact person you can reach to pick up your child. *Anyone who comes to the preschool to pick up your child must be on your emergency list.* We will ask for a picture ID of any person unknown to staff. Staff members will stay with the children until they have been picked up. Please be aware that our teachers will also be concerned about the safety of their own families; we, therefore, ask that you are considerate of their time as you make these emergency arrangements for your child.

Extended Lock-Down

If, at any time, Fairfax County or the federal government advises us of an unsafe situation, and has announced that all persons should stay where they are until further notice, the preschool will lock down the facility until it has been declared safe to travel. This plan may be enacted for situations such as severe weather or hazardous chemical exposure. In the event that this emergency plan is activated, please know that your children will be safe at the preschool and that we have supplies on hand to last up to 24 hours. ****We appreciate the donation of bottled water, to have on hand in the event an extended lock-down is necessary.****

**Parents of children with food allergies: Please send in an unopened, non-perishable snack (or one with an extended shelf life) for your child. Please remember to label this with your child's name, using a permanent marker.

Hazardous Chemicals/Biological/Radiological Exposure

In the event that we have been exposed to hazardous chemicals from an outside source, we will lock all doors and windows and will not allow anyone in or out of the church building until it is declared safe. This is for the safety of your children, preschool staff, church staff and any meeting groups that may be present at such a time.

Children and staff will remain together in the hallway between the Preschool Office and 4-year-old hallway.

Off-Site Evacuation Plan

In the case of an emergency requiring evacuation of the Grace Church building, all preschool students and staff will walk to the far end of the back parking lot (located on Bath Street). Staff members will have their cell phones with them, and every attempt will be made to contact parents once the evacuation is complete. An emergency bag will be carried and will contain parent contact information, a first aid kit, diapers, and wipes.

If we should deviate from any of these plans at any time, we will make every attempt to notify you as soon as possible.



Health Screening Questionnaire

COVID-19 health screening questions to be checked daily by a parent/guardian, and staff members

Staff and students should remain at home if ANY of the responses are “YES”

| YES or NO since your last day of school/work have you had any of the following symptoms? | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Feeling feverish and/or having chills – documented temperature of 99.6° F or higher? | | |
| Has there been any use of fever reducing medication within the last 24 hours? | | |
| A new cough that is not due to another health condition? | | |
| Nasal congestion or runny nose? | | |
| New shortness of breath or difficulty breathing that is not due to another health condition? | | |
| New chills that are not due to another health condition? | | |
| A new sore throat that is not due to another health condition? | | |
| New muscle aches that are not due to another health condition, or that may have been caused by a specific activity (such as physical exercises)? | | |
| Fatigue (more tired than usual)? | | |
| Headache? | | |
| A new loss of taste or smell? | | |
| Abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting? | | |
| New onset of poor appetite or poor feeling? | | |
| Have you had a positive test for the virus that causes COVID-19 disease within the past 10 days? | | |
| Were you currently tested for COVID-19 because you were sick and are still waiting for the lab results? | | |
| In the past 14 days, have you had close contact (within about 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19? | | |

All information on this form has been obtained from Fairfax County Schools website

Addendum A

Sick Student Notification

Student Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ AM/PM

Parent/Guardian:

Your student presented to **Grace Weekday Preschool** with the following new and unexplained symptoms:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| ◇ Fever/Chills Temp: _____ | ◇ Headache | ◇ Shortness of Breath |
| ◇ Sore Throat | ◇ Stomachache | ◇ Muscle Aches |
| ◇ Cough | ◇ Fatigue | ◇ Nausea/vomiting |
| ◇ Runny nose/congestion | ◇ Diarrhea | ◇ New Loss of taste/smell |

Due to COVID-19 in the community, evaluation by a healthcare provider is recommended for all sick children. Please take this form to your healthcare provider.

Observation Notes:

Signature: _____

Follow the **Return to School Guidance** below if your child was sent home with any of the above symptoms:

If NO close contact with COVID-19 case:

- **Positive COVID-19 test** - Isolate by staying home until 10 days from onset of symptoms, no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms are improving; or 10 days from day of positive test if never had symptoms.
- **Negative COVID-19 test** - Stay home until no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms are improving.
- **No testing done and no alternate diagnosis** - Isolate by staying home until 10 days from onset of symptoms, no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved.
- **Alternate diagnosis by a healthcare provider that explains symptoms** - Stay home until no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms are improving or longer as per provider's instructions.

If close contact with a COVID-19 case:

- **Positive COVID-19 test** - Isolate by staying home until 10 days from onset of symptoms, no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms are improving; or 10 days from day of positive test if never had symptoms.
- **Negative COVID-19 test or no testing done** - Quarantine by staying home until 14 days from the date of last exposure, no fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND symptoms have improved.

All information on this form has been obtained from the Fairfax County Department of Health website

Addendum B

2021-2022
GWP Committee Members

Elder, Kathy Drinkard

Financial Manager, Veronica Crump

Parent Representative, Rachel Amatuzzi

Teacher Representative, Kristie Mulhollem

Grace Presbyterian Church Representative, Maria Clayton

The Preschool Committee meets with the director on a quarterly basis throughout the school year, or as needed. To contact a committee member, please call the church office at 703-451-2900.

**Grace Weekday Preschool
Parent Handbook
Acknowledgement Form**

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the contents of the Parent Handbook and agree to abide by COVID-19 restrictions set forth in it.

Parent Signature

Date