

# Preschool Parent Handbook

## **Absence**

Please call the school office (278-0200) or email your child's teacher when he/she is unable to be at school. Let us know if your child has a contagious illness. If your child has been sick and you do not want him/her to be outside, please keep your child at home. For a planned extended absence, notification should be sent at least two weeks in advance to the Head of School.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

### *Morning Arrival*

Our morning program begins at 8:00 a.m., with early morning care offered beginning at 7:00 a.m. If arriving before 7:30 a.m., children should be taken to the Mudpuppies classroom to stay with Deborah Lowe, our morning care teacher. After 7:30 a.m., children are to be walked to their classrooms by their parents/caretakers, and left with their classroom teachers.

For morning drop-off, parents may park either on Peabody Avenue in front of Miss Lee's, or in the parking lot to the west of Miss Lee's. Parents and children may enter either through the west entrance of the preschool, or through the playground entrance. For afternoon pick-up, parents may either park in the Miss Lee's parking lot or on Peabody Avenue, and then walk inside to sign out their children from the classroom.

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**SAFETY REMINDER!** DO NOT leave children unattended in cars. DO NOT leave valuables visible in your car.

### *Afternoon Dismissal*

Our morning program ends promptly at 12:00 noon. If your child is not enrolled as a full day student, he/she needs to be picked up on time. The full day program continues with lunch and it is an uncomfortable time for your child when he/she is not a part of the regular activities.

### *Sign-out Sheet*

A sign-out sheet is located on the table beside each classroom door. Please be sure you sign your child out each day. This information is required for ASC billing as well as maintaining an accurate count of children in the class. If someone other than the parent or regular driver is picking up, that information needs to be communicated to the lead teacher in writing. A form titled "Who Can Pick Me Up?" needs to be on file in the school's office, indicating the adults you have authorized to pick up your child from school.

### *Late Arrivals*

When your child has to arrive later than usual, notice to the teachers is required. Special trips may be planned, or a special subject scheduled for that day. Children are considered late after 8:30 am, and absent for the day at 10:00 am. Children may only arrive after 10:00 am if advance notice has been given to the classroom teacher of extenuating circumstances, such as doctor or dentist appointments. Children who have missed the majority of the morning classroom time are not eligible to attend afterschool care (which begins at 12:00 noon.)

### **Assessment**

Children are assessed throughout the school year to monitor their growth across developmental areas. At Miss Lee's Preschool we utilize both formal assessments, such as the Brigance Developmental Screening, as well as teacher-developed assessments such as skills checklists and anecdotal observations, to capture the progress of each individual child. A central piece of our assessment process is the individual child portfolio. Teachers collect work samples throughout the school year to document children's actual classroom work in areas such as literacy, mathematics and fine motor skills. Parents have the opportunity to review these assessments in parent conferences and receive summaries of these assessments and their connection to classroom instruction in the narrative reports.

### **Birthdays**

Birthday celebrations are of great importance to young children. You are welcome to bring cupcakes, cookies, doughnuts, etc. and drinks for birthday celebrations. Please provide paper goods if necessary. Please inform the teacher of your plans a few days in advance. Children are not allowed to exchange presents at school, or to give out invitations to a birthday party unless everyone

in the class is invited. Hard candy is not allowed. Party favors, if provided, should be limited.

## **Biting**

Biting is a behavior that is both age and stage appropriate for children under the age of 3 years. Even in high quality programs, where faculty is vigilant, a variety of activities are available, and all preventative strategies are used, biting may still occur. Understanding the reasons for biting, taking the necessary preventative measures and communicating with families will hopefully bring an end to the problem. We understand the frustration from both sides of a biting incident and our faculty works very hard to ensure that the biting incident is handled in a way that respects both families involved in the incident.

We handle biting incidents as follows:

The child who is bitten is attended to immediately. The child is taken to a quiet area and the bite is examined and the child comforted. The bite is cleaned and ice is applied to prevent swelling. If the skin is broken and depending upon the severity of the bite, the child's parents will be contacted to let them decide if they wish to seek medical consultation.

After the child who was bitten is cared for, we focus on the biter. We remove the child from the area of play to another area and communicate that biting hurts and we need to be gentle. Teachers focus on explaining and demonstrating what gentle and acceptable behavior means. If the incident happens repeatedly, attention given to the child will vary to avoid establishing a predictable and routine pattern, which may become positive reinforcement for the behavior.

The parent(s) of the child who was bitten will be informed of the incident, and provided a copy of the incident report. With respect to confidentiality we do not share the name of the child who bit with the parent(s) of the child who was bitten.

The parent(s) of the child who bit will be informed of the biting incident, and provided a copy of the incident report. Due to confidentiality we do not share the name of the child who was bitten.

If the biting becomes habitual, the Head of Preschool will consult with the parent(s) to develop strategies that can be used at the school and in the home,

so that we are working together. Communication will continue on the status of the biting via e-mails, phone calls and/or meetings.

After all steps have been taken to address the biting behavior, and it is deemed in the best interest of the child and other children attending the preschool, then the child will be removed from the school. The Head of Preschool will work with the parent(s) to help develop a contingency/transitional plan and assist with referrals to appropriate child care services.

### **Carpools**

If you are interested in forming a carpool with other parents in your area of town, please let us know at Miss Lee's office at the beginning of school. We have the names and addresses of each family and will be happy to help you work out carpools. If you do participate in a carpool, please inform your child's teacher.

### **Chapel**

Preschool students participate in a 20-minute chapel service led by GSL clergy in the Anchor Center once a week. Chapel includes the celebration of birthdays, new babies, songs, and Bible stories.

### **Child Abuse Awareness & Prevention**

The safety and well being of the children in our care is our primary concern and responsibility. All GSL faculty and staff are trained in the Episcopal Church's program Safeguarding God's Children, a national program designed for child abuse awareness and prevention. Multiple sessions are available throughout the year at Episcopal churches in the area. Parents are welcome to attend these sessions.

In the classroom, teachers incorporate messages about safety, body awareness, and appropriate touching into various thematic units (such as health, community helpers, and feelings) as well as daily interactions and expectations in the classroom (keeping our hands to ourselves).

### **Conferences & Narrative Reports**

There are two parent/teacher conferences held during the year (Fall & Spring). However, if there is a need for additional conferences they can be arranged with your child's teacher. To provide a portrait of the progress of the whole child, teachers assess children in all developmental areas including physical (both fine motor and gross motor skills), language (speaking, listening, reading, and

writing), cognitive, and social/emotional. Progress reports will reflect your child's developmental progress.

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

GSL has written policies to ensure confidentiality of student records. This includes keeping records in secured locations and only allowing designated school personnel access to those records. Student records can only be released to outside agencies with the written permission of the parent.

### **Daily Schedule**

Each classroom follows a daily schedule, which includes choice time, snack, bathroom, story or circle time, center time and recess. Please consult with your child's teacher as to the specifics of that classroom's schedule.

### **Discipline**

We want your child to be happy and feel secure while at school. We will discipline him/her if he/she needs correcting, but it will be done gently and with love. We will refrain from embarrassing him/her before a group. A soft voice and non-accusatory approach will build trust conducive to a child telling the truth versus avoiding trouble. Our goal is to help your child solve problems, predict, plan, share, cooperate, and learn to get along. Most often the child either needs redirecting or guidance.

### **WE WILL:**

- impart the expectancy of obedience
- help the child to evaluate his/her disobedience
- allow the child to express his/her own viewpoint
- restore the fellowship after the discipline
- remember - the goal of discipline is not outward conformity but inward conviction
- admit our mistakes
- recognize that discipline is a long range process
- communicate limits that are necessary for learning (physical & emotional behavior)

### **WE WILL NOT:**

- compare one child with another

- use scorn, ridicule or humiliation
- threaten withdrawal of affection
- promise with bribes or rewards
- discipline when angry
- expect perfection
- be afraid to say “no”
- use any type of physical punishment

## **Dress for School**

### ***Appropriate Clothing***

Play clothing is the most appropriate dress for the preschool years. Most children enjoy painting and other messy activities, and although painting smocks are available to wear, it is impossible to ensure that any child comes home spotless. To help your child, send him/her to school in clothes meant for fun. They need durable, wash and wear clothes to withstand the challenge of the day.

Tennis shoes are the most comfortable and practical shoes on our playground. The velcro style closures on shoes allow your child the ability to handle their shoes by themselves.

Everything needs to be labeled with your child’s name. This includes blankets, lunch boxes, clothing, and extra clothing. Use a permanent marker or masking tape if necessary.

### ***Outside Play***

We play outside most days unless it is raining or below freezing temperature. Please dress your child appropriately. We must have our teachers on the playground to supervise play at all times and cannot leave your child unsupervised in the classroom.

We recommend layering of clothes on transitional days that could turn warmer or cooler. We also recommend mittens instead of gloves. Our outside play area is accessible and safe. It is properly equipped for climbing, riding and other gross motor activities.

### ***Change of Clothes***

Sometimes accidents happen. Please send a change of clothes (including socks and underwear) to be kept in your child’s cubby. Send them in a ziploc bag with your child’s name on them. Be sure to periodically check your child’s change of clothes to ensure they are seasonally appropriate.

## **Field Trips**

We feel that field trips are a vital part of our curriculum and we are fortunate that our location gives us easy access to some of the best places in town for young children to visit. The Memphis Zoo, Children's Museum, Mississippi River, Overton Park, Brooks Museum and downtown Memphis are all only a few minutes from our campus.

Please check our monthly calendars for field trip days that you might be able to attend. Parents will be asked periodically to assist with transporting the children. If you would be willing to drive on any field trips, you will need to fill out a form from the school office detailing your insurance coverage.

No child may leave campus without written permission of parents. Permission slips will be provided and must be returned for all field trips.

According to the Child Safety Law, every child 8 years of age or younger is required to ride in a car seat/booster seat. Therefore, your child will need to bring a car seat/ booster seat on all field trips.

## **Health**

The state of Tennessee requires that each child have a current health record on file. Your pediatrician can provide the form, which should include an up-to-date record of immunizations and current physical examination. Allergies should also be documented.

If your child becomes ill at school, on the advice of the teacher or director, the number listed on your registration card will be called with the expectation that a parent, relative or friend will come to pick up your child as quickly as possible. **Your child must be free of all symptoms of contagious illness at least 24 hours before returning to school.** This includes any degree of fever, red throat, unexplained rash, constant cough, diarrhea, vomiting, pink eye, yellow discharge from the nose, and lice.

If your child has a minor accident requiring minimal first aid, you will receive an "OUCH Report" detailing the injury. If your child is seriously hurt and may need outside medical assistance, you will receive an immediate phone call and an "Incident Report" detailing the injury, precipitating events, and care given.

If your child is on medication to be taken at school, please fill out a medicine form available from the school office and give the form and medication to Laura Bolding. If your child attends morning care, please give the form and medication to Deborah Lowe, the morning care teacher.

## **Lice Policy**

In an effort to combat the nuisance of lice, Grace-St. Luke's will take the following steps when lice are suspected and identified in a student's hair.

1. The school will examine the student's head and immediately notify the parent of the presence of lice and/or nits (eggs). The school has the final authority in the diagnosis of lice and/or nits on the school's behalf.
2. The parents must immediately pick up their child from school and treat the student for the lice infestation. Though over-the-counter medication is available, we recommend you consult with your child's pediatrician regarding their efficacy versus prescription-strength medication.
3. The child may return to school the next day if treatment has occurred, and no nits are present when a check is performed by the school.
4. The school reserves the right to check heads of any other children potentially exposed to lice. If two or more cases are identified in a grade, the entire grade will be checked.

(SEE HEALTH IN LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SECTION).

## **Inclement Weather - Emergency**

Closings due to inclement weather will be announced by 6:00 A.M. (or the evening before when possible) on your local T.V. and radio stations. We will also notify you via text message (if you have provided the school with your cell phone number) and post on social media (Twitter & Facebook) as well as our website.

(SEE LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SECTION)

## **Midmorning Snack**

Midmorning snack time is a part of our day. We recommend that your child help you in selecting the items. Please include a fork or spoon if needed. We discourage items high in sugar and preservatives. These foods--when placed in little bodies--often prevent a child from making wise choices at school. The midmorning snack needs to be labeled separately from lunch so that your child can distinguish between them.

## **Newsletters and Notices**

Each teacher will communicate with parents weekly through a classroom newsletter. This will be sent to you electronically. Also be sure to check your teacher's webpage on the GSL website for photos and information about events in your child's class.

### **Open House- “Back to School Night”**

After school begins, we will have an Open House for parents only. You are encouraged to come for a visit with your child’s teachers. This is the time when you will hear about plans for the year ahead, have time to ask questions about our program and hear about our educational goals for your child. This is not the time for conferences with teachers about specific problems regarding your child. Private conferences will be held two times a year for each family.

### **Parent Participation**

Parents are an important link in our program. You and your family greatly influence your child’s progress at school. Participation is encouraged through sharing a special talent or interest, reading a story, or eating lunch with your child. We need parents to go on field trips and help to plan and carry out parties.

### **Orientation**

Before school begins each year our classroom teachers have an informal orientation for the children. We ask children to come in small groups for a visit between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. the day before school begins. This gives the children an opportunity to meet with their teachers, see their classroom, and play for an hour in an effort to make the transition from home to school easier for everyone. Parents will receive an invitation from the teacher to come for this orientation.

### **Seasonal Gatherings**

To help the preschool families get to know one another, we will plan several activities during the school year. A family atmosphere is desired for our school. Some of the activities include a Fall Picnic, Valentine’s Day Parent Breakfast, Parent Brunch, Grandparents’ Day and special classroom programs and plays.

### **School Pictures**

Class pictures and individual pictures will be made in the fall. Parents will be given the opportunity to purchase these pictures. Each child who attends GSL will be pictured in the yearbook and also receive a copy of the yearbook.

### **Special Subjects**

#### ***Library***

Students visit the school library in the Anchor Center once a month to listen to stories and visit with the library staff.

### ***Music***

Music is a special part of each day in every classroom. Teachers offer children a variety of experiences in which to learn about music in different forms and styles. In addition, all children have a weekly period of music instruction provided by the preschool's music teacher.

### ***Physical Education***

Once a week each class will have 30-minute experience called Fun and Fitness. This developmentally appropriate program involves large muscle movement and promotes total involvement for each child. Our goal is to lay a foundation for a lifetime of exercise and fitness and to promote good health.

### ***Spanish***

An introduction to Spanish is provided to all preschool students two times a week.

### **Speech and Language Services**

Clinicians from Germantown Speech and Language come in the fall to screen all PK and new JK students. If children are identified as having specific speech and language issues, Germantown Speech and Language will contact the parents to discuss remediation and therapy options.

### **Toilet Training**

#### ***Little Lukers***

It is the expectation that children in the Little Lukers program are working towards being toilet trained. Teachers will collaborate with parents to determine a child's readiness for toilet training and the best strategies to create consistency between home and school during this process. Parents will need to supply diapers or pull-ups as well as wipes during the training process. In addition, multiple changes of clothing will need to be kept in the child's cubby throughout the year. Children transitioning from Little Lukers to PK who attend summer camp are required to be fully toilet trained.

#### ***Pre-Kindergarten***

Being fully toilet trained is an entrance requirement for all incoming PK students. During the first weeks of school, teachers will monitor children who seem to have difficulty with independently toileting. If a child has repeated accidents, the teachers and Head of Preschool will recommend that the child stay out of school

for one week to further work on toilet training skills at home. Upon return to school, if consistent accidents continue to occur, the teachers and Head of Preschool will meet with parents to determine if the child is ready for the PK environment.

### **Toys from Home**

We discourage bringing toys from home for several reasons. We have bought the best toys available for use in the classrooms. Many young children cannot handle the responsibility of sharing a treasured toy with other children. There is also a risk of toys from home being broken and/or lost. Please leave all toys at home.

## **Afternoons at Miss Lee's**

Our ASC program begins at 3:00 PM and is only available to children who have attended the morning school program. Preschool teachers stay until 3:00 and our after school care staff come into the classroom at 2:00. This gives the children time to eat lunch, rest and have a snack before After School Care activities begin.

### *Lunch*

Each child who stays for a full day should bring a lunch box (labeled with their name) with a nutritious, easy to eat lunch and drink. Milk can be ordered by the semester. It is delivered each morning and kept cool in our refrigerator. Please include a fork and spoon if needed.

### *Nap/Rest*

After a full day of play and activities, all preschoolers need a rest time. Please send a blanket or small pillow with your child if he/she is staying for the day. We provide mats and covers. Children are allowed to sleep with a small soft toy, but toy cars, action figures, etc. are too difficult to manage during naptime.

### *Afternoon Snack*

Preschool teachers stay on campus until 3:00 and our After School Care Staff comes into the classroom at 2:00 PM. This provides time for teachers to discuss any issues with ASC staff, and then transition to afternoon faculty meetings.

The two hours from 3:00 to 5:00 are filled with arts & crafts, drama, cooking, and outside play. As long as the child is playing and getting along with his/her friends, it is possible to explore in any of these areas for extended periods of time. If a child is not getting along with the other children in the area that he/she has chosen, then he/she is redirected to another area. In each of the areas our After School Care Staff oversee and guide their play.

At 5:00 PM, the children go back to their small groups with their teacher for quiet games and stories. You may pick up your child anytime during the afternoon and sign them out by their classroom. If you have any questions or concerns about After School Care, please address them to Ashley Blake, Director of After School Care at Miss Lee's.

### ***Holiday Care***

Holiday Care is usually provided during the school year when school is not in session. Holiday Care registration forms are available online for each holiday and must be submitted by the registration deadline.

### ***Enrichment***

During the fall and spring, enrichment classes are offered in the afternoons to LL, PK and JK students. We currently offer gymnastics, ballet, karate, yoga, piano, art and Chinese language for preschool and are always investigating opportunities for additional classes. Registration takes place before the beginning of each session. Sessions begin in September and again in January. Please contact Brooke Shannon, Director of ASC & Enrichment for more information.