

Preschool Parent Handbook

Absence

Please call the school office (278-0200) or email your child's teacher when s/he 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 Preschool.

Arrival and Dismissal

Morning Arrival

Our morning program begins at 8 a.m., with early morning care offered beginning at 7 a.m. If arriving before 7:30 a.m., children should be taken to the Makerspace with Ariel Laws, 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.

PARKING

Please enter Miss Lee's from behind the school on Linden. Parking is available in the upper parking lot at Miss Lee's for student drop-off and pick-up. **To EXIT Miss Lee's, please drive south up the hill and turn right onto Peabody.**

If spots are not available in Miss Lee's parking lot, please circle back around. Parking is also available in the parking lot at the southeast corner of Peabody and Belvedere.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

- **Please do NOT block the driveways of our neighbors.**
- **Always enter campus from Linden behind the school.**
- **Safety first: Please do not use your cell phone while in car line.**
- **Please do not park in spaces at the bottom of the hill behind the Anchor Center.**
- **The hill limits visibility, and we want you to be safe!**

- **Please be aware of students crossing the street at all times. 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 p.m. If your child is not enrolled as a full day student, s/he needs to be picked up on time. The full day program continues with lunch and can be uncomfortable for your child when s/he 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 ACE 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 a.m., and absent for the day at 10 a.m. Children may only arrive after 10 a.m. 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 ACE: After School Care (which begins at 3 p.m.)

Assessment

Children are assessed throughout the school year to monitor their growth across developmental areas. 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 important 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 like ours where faculty members are 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 incident is handled in a way that respects both families involved.

We handle biting incidents as follows:

The child who is bitten is attended to immediately. The child is taken to a quiet area, the bite is examined, and the child is 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 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. Due to confidentiality, we do not share the name of the child who bit with the parent(s) of the child who was bitten.

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If the biting continues, 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 emails, phone calls, and/or meetings.

If the biting behavior becomes habitual, it may be necessary to remove the child 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 childcare services.

Chapel

Preschool students participate in a 20-minute chapel service led by GSL clergy once a week. Chapel includes the celebration of birthdays, new babies, songs, and Bible stories. It is also a time when the entire preschool is assembled together and special school-wide themes such as the Formative Five and other activities are introduced.

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). We use the resource provided by the Tennessee Department of Education titled *Keeping Kids Safe*.

Conferences & Progress Reports

There are two parent/teacher conferences held during the year in September and January. (Additional conferences are available if needed.)

Progress reports are written three times a year, in August/September, November/December and April/May. 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. In the spring, JK reports provide detailed information about the development of skills in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, and the arts.

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, outdoor classroom, 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 s/he needs correcting, but it will be done gently and with love. We will refrain from embarrassing a child in front of 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 fellowship after the discipline
- focus on the goal of discipline, which is not outward conformity, but inward conviction
- admit our mistakes
- recognize that discipline is a long-term 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 clothes are the most appropriate attire 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 activities of the day. Tennis shoes are the most comfortable and practical shoes on our playground. Velcro-style closures allow your child to handle 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, even if there is light rain. However, in the event of heavy rain, below-freezing temperatures, or extreme heat, children will remain indoors. As part of your child’s supplies to keep at school, we ask that you send rain boots and rain jackets. This makes playing outdoors after the rain more fun!

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 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 cubbie. Send them in a Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. Be sure to periodically check your child's change of clothes to ensure they are seasonally appropriate.

Field Trips

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 just a few minutes from 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 the 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 have a car seat/booster seat for 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 head, the number listed on your registration card will be called with the expectation that a parent, relative, or friend will come 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. Please see the COVID handbook for our policy on COVID-related symptoms.

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 the Preschool Administrative Assistant. If your child attends morning care, please give the form and medication to 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 THE HEALTH SECTION IN THE LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK.)

Inclement Weather - Emergency

Closings due to inclement weather will be announced by 6 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 (Facebook, Instagram & Twitter) as well as our website.

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 via our Kaymbu system. Please take the time to review these newsletters, as teachers share lots of class news and events.

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 for this orientation.

Back to School Night

After school begins, we will have a Back to School Night 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 issues regarding your child. Private conferences will be held twice 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' help with field trips, class parties, and our annual gardening event.

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, Gardening Day, and other special classroom programs. **Dependent upon COVID-19 protocols at time of event.*

School Pictures

Class and individual pictures will be taken 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 twice a month to listen to stories and visit with the library staff.

Music & Movement

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. This developmentally appropriate program also involves large muscle movement and promotes total involvement for each child.

Spanish

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

Discover ME- Mindfulness

This program helps our students learn self-control, how to regulate their emotions, and develop skills and vocabulary that helps them express their feelings.

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 SummerFest 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 returning 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 ACE: After School Care program begins at 3 p.m. and is only available to children who attend the morning school program. Preschool teachers stay until 3 p.m. and ACE staff come into the classroom at 2 p.m. This gives the children time to eat lunch, rest, and have a snack before ACE activities begin. It also provides time for teachers to discuss any issues with the ACE staff.

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. Please include a fork and spoon if needed.

Nap/Rest

After a full day of play and activities, all preschoolers need rest time. Children are not forced to nap but are encouraged to rest their bodies. Please send a blanket or small pillow with your child if s/he 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

One part of the afternoon activities is snack time. Please make sure you not only pack a morning snack but also an afternoon snack.

The two hours from 3-5 p.m. are filled with arts and 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 any of these areas for extended periods of time. If a child is not getting along with the other children in the area that s/he has chosen, then s/he is redirected to another area. In each of the areas our ACE staff oversee and guide their play.

At 5 p.m. the children go back to their small groups with their teacher for quiet games and stories. You may pick up your child according to the outlined ACE pick-up times. If you have any questions or concerns about ACE, please address them to Ashley Blake, Associate Director of ACE at the Preschool.

ACE @ Play

ACE @ Play is usually provided during the school year when school is not in session. ACE @ Play 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 Amy Lee, Director of Auxiliary Programs, for more information or visit the ACE page on GSL's website.