

St. Matthew Lutheran School Preschool Handbook



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248.624.7677
www.stmatthewlutheralschool.com

Welcome to St. Matthew Preschool!

Welcome to St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool where we place a high value on your child's Early Childhood experiences, as well as his/her spiritual development. Your child is one of the greatest blessings that the Lord has given to you, and selecting a Preschool environment that best fits your family is a very important decision. We are delighted that you have selected our Preschool and we look forward to partnering with you as your child continues to grow in so many amazing ways throughout the year.

School Mission Statement:

Together in Christ: learning, growing, serving

Curriculum:

Spiritually-We utilize "Voyages" from Concordia Publishing House for both the three-year-old and four-year-old programs. Through these Bible stories from both the Old and New Testaments, our students will learn about our great God and His great love for us.

Academically- We utilize curriculum from Zoo Phonics and Handwriting Without Tears as well as additional age appropriate pre-Math and Science activities.

Physically-Developmentally appropriate activities such as: running, hopping, dancing, etc. will be encouraged outside as well as in our gym. When time and weather allow, we go outside for recess. However, our school policy states that we will not go outside when the wind chill is below 15 degrees.

Admission:

- Our enrollment process begins the first week of March. Registration forms will be mailed out or available in the school office.
- We follow the State of Michigan age requirements that children must be the age of the class that they are they are entering before September 1st.
- We require that students must be trained in toilet routines that include the knowledge of when to use the bathroom and the ability to independently remove clothing. Training pants or disposable 'Pull-Ups" are not appropriate for Preschool.
- The State of Michigan requires that all children must be current with immunizations. If a parent selects to not to immunize for any reason, a formal waiver must be filed through your local health department. Information regarding this procedure is available in the school office.
- If your child has any medical conditions or food allergies, **PLEASE** let us know before the first day of school so that we can ensure proper training for every staff member regarding how to properly care for your child.

Refund of Tuition and/or Fees

1. Families withdrawing after registering will be responsible for Fees and/or Tuition for items/services in which St. Matthew has incurred costs. Requests for refunds must be in writing to the School Board Ministry and will be reviewed on an individual basis. These fees include books/supplies, art instruction, computer, and physical education.
2. Registration fees are refundable as follows:
 - If a family withdraws their registration on or before June 15, the enrollment and any other fees paid up front will be refunded.
 - If a family withdraws after June 15, fees will be refunded only in the case of class unavailability. If class space is available, families will be responsible for the enrollment fee, books/supplies, art instruction, computer and physical education fees.
 - No fees will be refunded if a family withdraws on or after the first day of school.
 - If a family withdraws between the time of registration and the first day of school, tuition that was paid will be refunded 100%.
 - If a family withdraws on or after the first day of school, tuition will be calculated based on nine months and pro-rated for the number of months attended.

Administration and Staffing:

- St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool is operated by St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Walled Lake, Michigan and licensed by the State of Michigan.
- A copy of the Preschool Licensing Notebook is available outside of the Preschool classroom.
- The preschool is staffed by a qualified director, teacher, and aides who are loving and caring Christian people. Our staff stays current in their practices and teaching methodologies by completing 16 hours of professional development each year.
- All staff members are required to have a professional criminal background check.
- The School Board Ministry of St. Matthew Lutheran School assists in all school policies.

Parent Volunteers:

We welcome parents to volunteer in our classroom! However, please be aware that our church/school has a "Child and Youth Safety Screening Policy" that we must adhere to. All volunteers must present a valid driver's license before volunteering so that a proper background check can occur. All volunteers will assist staff members and not be left alone with children.

Communication

Listed below are just a few helpful names and numbers that may help to address any questions and/or concerns:

Mrs. Lisa Rohman - Teacher: Please speak to her or contact school office to set up appointment regarding any classroom concerns.

Mrs. Bonnie Papez - School Secretary: Available from 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Call in sick child or school question

Mrs. Sue Baglow - School Accountant: Available in 300 wing office
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Tuition Questions

Mrs. Sue Palka - Principal Available from 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Newsletters:

You will receive a weekly newsletter from the classroom teacher every Sunday evening. You will receive a weekly newsletter from the school office every Thursday. Both of these newsletters contain very important information and dates. If you do not receive either of these newsletters, please contact your teacher or Mrs. Papez in the school office.

School Mailboxes:

Each Preschool family will have a school mailbox, which will be located in the 200 Wing hallway. Mailboxes are alphabetized. Members of St. Matthew are located on the right. Community families have mailboxes on the far left side of the entire mailbox collection. Please check these mailboxes weekly for information from the school office or school accountant.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

Held in January. Information regarding sign-up for these conferences will be posted in teacher newsletter. However, a conference may be requested at any time by a parent or teacher.

Drop-off and Pick-up Policy:

Arrival-

- Preschool begins at 8:20 a.m. and we appreciate your promptness to have your child in the classroom by 8:20 a.m. Students may arrive as early as 8:10 a.m. which gives them time to get acclimated and use restroom if necessary.
- Our parking lot experiences a lot of traffic in the morning. Please use the front lot and the appropriate sidewalk so that you do not have to cross the lane of moving traffic to enter into the building. To ensure safety, please hold on to your child's hand.

- Please bring your child into the classroom and sign them in, using their first and last names. Hugs and kisses good-bye help to smooth the transition from your care into our care!

Pick-up-

- Preschool has the option of dismissing at 11:20 a.m., 1:20 p.m. or 3:20 p.m.
- Please wait and enter through the doors located by the Preschool room.
- The Preschool teacher will bring your children to you.
- If you should wish to speak to the teacher, please wait until all the children have been picked up so that you can speak in private.
- Please sign out your child using their first and last name
- If your child is going home with someone other than you or the designated pick-up person, please complete the attached form at the end of this packet so that we have your permission in writing.
- Due to our school's dismissal at 3:30 p.m., it is very important that you be on time if you want to avoid the intense traffic that occurs in our parking lot at this time. Please park in the front lot to avoid the Day School traffic.
- If you have an older student, please park in the back lot so that you can participate in that dismissal process at 3:30 p.m. and pick your child up at the Preschool doors at 3:20 p.m. If this presents a problem, please speak with your child's Preschool teacher if special arrangements need to occur.

Early Dismissals-

Please let your child's teacher know if you need to pick your child up early. When you arrive, please stop in the school office and the secretary will have your complete the necessary documentation to remove a child early from school. We will do our best to have your child and his/her backpack ready and waiting for you. Please sign student out, using first and last names.

Late Arrivals:

Please be aware that St. Matthew is a secure building. All doors are locked once school begins at 8:20 a.m. If you are arriving late, please use the front main doors of the building. You will need to sign-in at the Welcome desk and then go to the School office where your child will be officially signed in.

Absences:

If your child will be absent from school, please contact the school office to make us aware and so that we can pray for your child.

Exclusion for Illness:

To help ensure the safety and wellness of all our students, we are requesting that students do not attend school for the following reasons:

Symptom:

Fever of 100 degrees or higher
 Diarrhea, vomiting, upset stomach
 Body rash
 Severe cough
 Eye discharge
 Greenish discharge from nose
 Head lice

Keep child home until:

Fever free for 24 hours
 No further problem exists
 A doctor's note approves return
 Cough diminishes
 A doctor's note approves return
 Discharge subsides
 Hair is treated and nit free

No student, staff member or volunteer should be present with any of these conditions. If any of these symptoms should present themselves during the school day, the student, staff member or volunteer will be removed from the group and our school secretary will be the necessary phone calls to parents and/or locate an appropriate substitute. Students who are being sent home due to illness will remain in the school office until a parent can pick them up.

Injuries/Incidents:

If a child should become injured during the school day, the staff will immediately attend to the child's needs and the school secretary will contact the child's parents.

Incident/Accident Policy-Our staff will do everything possible to provide a safe atmosphere for your child while he/she is attending St. Matthew Preschool. However, if an accident or incident should occur, our staff will take the following steps:

- Attend to the child-staying with him/her at all times
- Basic first aide will be administered if needed
- Parents will be notified immediately by the school secretary or principal
- If necessary, 911 will be called for assistance
- Necessary paperwork will be completed immediately once the situation is under control

School Closing/Emergency Procedures:

In the event of unplanned closings of school due to weather conditions, we will follow the decision of Walled Lake Public Schools. The announcements are made on Channel 7 and 4 local news, as well as WJR radio. You will also receive an email from our school.

In the event that hazardous weather should develop during the school day, school may be cancelled. Again, we will follow the Walled Lake Public School district's decision. If this should happen, parents will be contacted by the school secretary.

In the event that we should need to evacuate our building due to a fire or gas leak, students will be taken to another area of our St. Matthew property entitled the HOME, which is the house located next to the south parking lot. Parents will be instructed to pick children up from that location if the situation should warrant.

Preschool Classroom Discipline/Management Policy:

Our staff uses positive and Christ-centered methods of discipline. Scripture states in Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it". Utilizing this command from God, we understand the importance of setting appropriate boundaries for children and then age appropriate ways in which to redirect or remind them of the rules. All forms of discipline will be done in loving and Godly ways, and corporal punishment or any physical activity will never be used.

Classroom rules would include:

- Show God's love toward others
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself
- Use an inside voice when in the building
- Show respect for the school and other's children's belongings
- Walk in the classroom and the hallways

We will begin on the first day of school teaching these rules and reminding the children about them. Since children need practice in order to remember, we will always encourage children who seem to be having trouble remembering the rules. We practice the three R's procedure of: Remind, Redirect, and as a last step, Remove the child from the area but not the classroom for a quiet thinking time. If a child is having a challenging or difficult time, the classroom aide or the teacher will lovingly work with that child. All forms of discipline will be done in loving and Godly ways. If the teacher feels that it is necessary, a parent conference may be scheduled to help all parties involved brainstorm solutions for how to best address a behavioral issue.

We also encourage our students to use their words when a conflict arises among between them. Our goal is to encourage them to try and work it out between the two of them before adults need to get involved. During our first weeks together, we will work very hard at cultivating and encouraging friendships and establish a safe and loving atmosphere in our classroom.

Snacks:

Snacks are a scheduled part of our preschool day. It is an opportunity for your child to socialize, refuel their bodies, and learn how to be more independent by serving themselves and cleaning up after themselves.

Please note the following:

- Each child will bring his/her own snack for each day. Suggestions would be fruit, vegetables w/dip, nut free crackers, pretzels, gold fish, bagel with cream cheese, nut-free muffin, yogurt, etc.
- Please strive to send in a healthy snack
- **We are a "peanut-free" classroom PLEASE do not send peanut or any type of nut product.**
- We will serve water so no drink is necessary for snack
Please have your child bring his/her snack in a pre-packaged/zip lock baggie or container that has his/her name on it.

Birthday Snacks:

We love celebrating birthdays and thanking God for the gift of your child! If you would like to send in a birthday treat, please speak to your child's teacher regarding arranging this. **Please make sure that your treat is nut-free** and in individual portions so that it is easy to distribute among all of the children.

We have napkins, cups and spoons in our room. Occasionally, we may ask parents to replenish our supply.

Birthday Parties:

If you are planning a birthday party for your child with just a select few students from the class are invited, please send your invitations through the mail to avoid hurt feelings. If you are inviting the entire class, we would be happy to put invitation in student cubbies at school.

Lunch:

For those students who are staying for an extended day of Preschool beyond 11:20 a.m., a lunch will need to be provided. Once again, we remind you that **we are a "Peanut free" classroom** so please do not send any peanut butter or peanut products in your child's lunch. However, we do ask that you please send a drink in with your child's lunch. All lunch boxes must be labeled with your child's name and placed in the lunch box tub that has the proper date school written on it and located outside of our classroom.

Rest Time:

Students enrolled in our extended day program of five hours or longer will be required to take a rest period. Mats will be provided. Please bring your own pillow and blanket and put them in a clear plastic bag (old comforter plastic zipper bags work very well) so that they are protected.

Student Supplies:

- Please label your child's backpack, coats, and boots
- Please make sure that your child has an extra set of clothes placed in a Ziploc bag and left in their backpack.
- Please make sure that your child wears socks each day
- A Supply list is sent home before school starts. Please bring your child's supplies to school on the very first day

Kids Care:

We understand that not all family schedules are conducive to a school day schedule. Kids Care is a before and after school program that was designed to address childcare needs. The hours of our Kids Care program is from 7:00-8:10 a.m. and 3:30-6:00 p.m. If you are interested in enrolling into this program, please contact the school office at (248) 624-7677.

Field Trips:

Field trips occur about every other month and most field trips take place during our regular scheduled class time. Field trips outside the classroom require each child have an adult accompany them.

Singing in Church:

On occasion, the Preschool students will have an opportunity to sing in church and enhance the worship service with their joyous songs of praise. The Preschoolers also partner with the Kindergarten student and perform in a yearly Christmas program. Details regarding all of these opportunities will be posted in the teacher and school newsletters closer to performance dates.

Volunteer Hours

Each family is expected to contribute 20 volunteer hours throughout the school year. There will be many opportunities to achieve these hours. Attending field trips, classroom parties, classroom events, etc. all can be used towards obtaining your 20 hours. All volunteer hours must be logged electronically. You will be receiving information at the beginning of the school year regarding how to log your hours. However, please be aware that our church/school has a "Child and Youth Safety Screening Policy" that we must adhere to. All volunteers must present a valid driver's license before volunteering so that a proper background check can occur. All volunteers will assist staff members and not be left alone with children.

A Typical Day of A St. Matthew Preschooler

Greeting Time 8:10-8:30: As we enter the classroom, we answer the question of the day, sign our names on the attendance sheets and engage in a fun activity with our friends until class begins.

Jesus Time 8:30-8:50: We hear a Bible story, watch puppets, take part in a circle prayer and dance and sing praise songs. We do a lot of sharing during this time about our feelings and thoughts and how God wants us to follow Him. We pray for our friends and family members who need Jesus' love and healing. We ask God to bless our day at Preschool. On Wednesdays, we attend Chapel with the other classes in our school.

Potty Break 8:50-9:00

Circles Time 9:00-9:20: This is when we choose our helpers of the day, and have calendar and weather time. We also take attendance by looking at the question of the day. At this time, I introduce the activities that will be at the learning centers.

Learning Centers 9:30-10:15: We choose areas in the classroom to explore, create, and pretend with our friends. We might play in the sensory table build with blocks, dress up, drive cars in shaving cream, paint with different objects, or make sculptures with play dough. During this time, we get to work in small groups with our teachers. We might practice identifying letters/numbers with our Zoo phonics curriculum or by playing a game, explore something in our science center, make books, practice fine motor skills or work on a "Handwriting Without Tears" curriculum or a special project together.

Clean UP/Snack Time 10:15-10:30: We clean our room and then have a snack. We enjoy pouring our own water. We practice table manners and chat with our friends and teachers.

Large Group Time 10:30-10:45: At this time we listen to wonderful children's literature relating to our theme for

the day. We discuss stories, learning the beginning, middle and end of a story, make predictions and have questions to answer. We sing songs, play games and musical instruments.

Outdoor or Gym Time 11:00-11:20: This is our favorite time of the day! We play a group game or have free play where we can exercise our bodies and work on developing those important large motor skills.

Dismissal 11:20

Please continue to see Extended Day options:

Potty Break 11:20-11:30

Lunch Time 11:30-11:55: Each child brings his/her own lunch and drink. Please NO Peanut products

Quiet Time 12:00-12:12:15: During this time, the children will have quiet activities set on the carpet for them, such as books, puzzles or coloring activities

Enrichment Activities 12:15-12:30: This is the time of the day where we focus on an activity pertaining to either cooking, science, art, social studies, or drama

Work Time/Outside 12:30-12:50: We choose areas in the classroom to explore, create, and pretend with our friends. We might play in the sensory table build with blocks, dress up, drive cars in shaving cream, paint with different objects, or make sculptures with play dough. During this time, we get to work in small groups with our teachers. We might practice identifying letters/numbers with our Zoo phonics curriculum or by playing a game, explore something in our science center, make books, practice fine motor skills or work on a "Handwriting Without Tears" curriculum or a special project together.

Clean Up 12:50-1:00

Circle Time 1:00-1:15 At this time we will read a story, play a game, and sing songs

Closing/Goodbye 1:20 (For those leaving at this time)

Potty Break 1:25-1:30:

Rest Time 1:30-1:55: Each child lays down on a mat with pillow and blanket brought from home. If your child falls asleep, please be advised that we will let your child sleep and not wake them up unless parent request

Snack Time 1:55-2:05: Child bring his/her own snack from home. Please label "afternoon snack" so that we can ensure that snack is saved at lunch

Work Time 2:05-2:35:

Clean Up 2:35-2:45

Art Project 2:45-3:00

Outside/Gym 3:00-3:15

Goodbye 3:20

