



Noah's Ark Preschool Parent Handbook

St. John's Lutheran Church

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Dear Parents,

On behalf of our teachers, Board of Directors and Church family here at St. John's, I want to welcome you to a new school year! We are so excited to have the privilege to lead and guide your child in learning. We pray that this year will be full of new experiences, conquered milestones, and growth in mind and heart.

As this year unfolds, please feel free to ask any questions or share any concerns you may have. As a Preschool within St. John's Lutheran Church, we hope to be of service to you and to partner with your family as we work to build a strong foundation of faith and knowledge in each student in our care. We cannot wait to see what God has for us at Noah's Ark Preschool this year!

Anne Harvey, Director
Noah's Ark Preschool

Noah's Ark Preschool

Board Of Directors: Names and contacts of current Board Members are available upon request. Board members are also members of St. John's Lutheran Church.

Center Director: Anne Harvey
anne@stjohnsbuffalo.org

Statement of Purpose and Philosophy:

The purpose of Noah's Ark Preschool is to provide the children of our congregation and community with a quality Christian education in a safe and caring environment.

We strive to provide an education that builds and nurtures the whole child, including his or her spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social and physical development. We believe that each student is a unique and special child of God.

We seek to build a partnership with parents and families in hope that we can work together to build a strong foundation of faith and knowledge in each student.

*"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old
he will not depart from it."*

Proverbs 22:6

Objectives of Noah's Ark Preschool:

To provide:

- A safe, caring climate where children can grow and learn.
- Play with a purpose in which fun, planned activities promote learning.
- Theme-based learning and a strong Christian curriculum; we also offer handwriting, math, language and literacy curricula.
- An environment culturally based on the child's individuality, with indoor and outdoor activities and materials to meet the various developmental levels.
- Areas of activity including construction, dramatic play, art, science, music, literature, and physical development.
- Opportunities to play and learn with other children and form positive relationships.
- A partnership between teachers and parents or the child's family, which is crucial in the growth of the student.
- Development of social skills, self-help skills, listening skills, and group interactions.
- Areas of learning identified by the teacher as helpful in the preparation for Kindergarten.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

Noah's Ark Preschool admits all children and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, or gender to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate against race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, or gender in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and other school administered programs.

Inclusive Childcare Center:

As a childcare provider, we continually monitor the development of all children in our care through ongoing observation and written records. We want the best outcomes for all children. Childcare providers are considered a primary referral source for early intervention under federal IDEA Special Education Law. We are required to refer a child in our program who has been identified as having developmental concerns or a risk factor that warrants a referral as soon as possible, but in no case more than seven days after the identification. While this is a mandate, we want to keep open communication with parents and caregivers about their child and discuss any concerns we have before a referral is made. We are able and willing to assist the parent with the referral or partner with them in the referral process. Noah's Ark Preschool will use the Center for Inclusive Child Care as a resource to help accommodate all children in our program.

Ownership and Governance:

Noah's Ark Preschool at 302 2nd Street NE in Buffalo, Minnesota is a ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church. Our program is operated as a not-for-profit institution, licensed by the state of Minnesota Department of Human Services, for children ages 33 months old through Kindergarten entry. The Board of Directors of Noah's Ark Preschool governs the program. This board is comprised of St. John's Lutheran Church congregational members and the Center Director.

Operational Information

Noah's Ark Preschool operates Monday through Friday, September through May. The center is closed for major holidays, as well as teacher workshop days throughout the year. A schedule of closures for the year will be given in registration information.

Contact Information:

302 2nd St. NE
Buffalo, MN 55313
Phone Number: 763-682-1883
Fax: 763-343-7885
Website: www.stjohnsbuffalo.org/preschool
Email: noahsarkbuffalo@gmail.com

Tax ID Number:

For tax purposes, please use our Tax ID number of 41-0859352 when filing.

School Closings and Inclement Weather:

If Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose schools are *closed*, Noah's Ark Preschool is CLOSED. If Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose schools have a *2-hour delayed start*, Noah's Ark is CLOSED for the entire day.

In the instance of other emergencies that significantly compromise the program's ability to care for children safely or operate to basic licensing standards, families will be notified via email and phone call to communicate the nature of the emergency and the program's response to it. Families may be instructed to pick up their children early or before a certain time, depending on the nature of the emergency.

Students participate in fire, tornado, and safety drills during the school year.

Enrollment Information

Tours:

Prospective families are **highly encouraged** to tour our program and fully understand the services that we offer. In addition, we request that children come along for tours.

Applications and Admissions:

All application forms must be completed prior to the child's first day of school. Enrollment at Noah's Ark Preschool is open to children between 3 years of age and Kindergarten entry. The forms to be completed are as follows

Forms can be found online at www.stjohnsbuffalo.org/parent-resources/

*Online Enrollment Application	*Tuition Agreement
*Immunization/Exemption Record	*Media Permission Form
*Health Care Summary (signed by a Physician)	*Signed Handbook
*Getting to Know Your Preschooler Form	

Upon completion of the Online Enrollment Application and payment of Registration Fee, children are considered for admission when space is available. Priority is given to previously enrolled children and/or siblings of enrolled students. **Completion of this application does not guarantee enrollment.** Registration is complete when all of the above forms are submitted and you have been notified of successful enrollment. When any information on these forms becomes out of date, parents must update the information as promptly as possible.

Arrival and Dismissal:

Parents or authorized pickup/drop off persons are required to bring their student(s) in each day. We ask that you assist your child by hanging their belongings, taking them to the bathroom to wash their hands, and wait with them until the start of class. The authorized pickup/drop off person is responsible for supervision the child prior to and after class. Class begins promptly at 9:00, according to their class schedule. Teachers' doors do not open before the start of class. Parents or adults should remain with their student until he or she enters the classroom.

Please be sure to pick up your child by dismissal time (11:30 or 2:00). Parents are asked to come into the building to pick up and check their child's mailbox before leaving for the day. Children are not released to anyone other than their parent/guardian and/or persons authorized for pick up in the child's record. If someone other than those individuals previously designated will be picking up your child, we must have written authorization before releasing a child. Please fill out a Transportation Pickup Change Form at drop off, if you know someone different will be picking your student up. Our staff reserves the right to retain a child if we feel the child would be placed in an unsafe situation. If a teenage sibling is picking up a child, they must be at least 16 years of age, and be previously introduced to the teacher by the child's parent. Noah's Ark preschool does not offer transportation, but we recommend contacting Trailblazer Transit for assistance with this, as they may drop off and pick up at Noah's Ark Preschool.

Child Attendance:

We value any additional time your child may be able to spend at home or with relatives. However, if your child is ill or absent for any reason, we ask that you notify our staff by emailing noahsarkbuffalo@gmail.com or calling the St. John's Lutheran Church office at 763-682-1883. No vacation or sick time is extended, and tuition is due in full each month, whether the child is present or not. Noah's Ark Preschool does not credit accounts due to illness, vacation, holidays, or inclement weather.

Parent Information, Involvement and Visits:

Parent information will be communicated via newsletters and paperwork sent home with children, through their mailbox. Teachers may also post reminders and announcements on top of the mailbox. It is important to check these areas often to take home artwork and important information.

It is part of our philosophy to build a partnership with families; it is to each child's advantage that we work together cooperatively. A child receives a great deal of satisfaction when parents are interested and involved in the life of their school, and for these reasons, we ask that families make an effort to remain informed of happenings at Noah's Ark Preschool. We also ask that parents make time to participate in their children's conferences as well as any events we may host throughout the year.

Communication between parents and staff is highly encouraged. We ask that parents bring forward any concerns or worries, as well as inform the teachers of any significant home events. Please discuss with the director or your child's teacher about a time to meet, if needed. Conferences may be arranged upon request, beyond our scheduled conferences in January. If concerns or issues are unresolved, further questions may be brought to the Noah's Ark Preschool Director, and, if needed, to the Noah's Ark Board of Directors.

As we seek to fulfill the Lord's request to fulfill the ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church and our congregation's priority to spread the Gospel of Christ, the families of Noah's Ark Preschool are welcomed into our fellowship. Should any situation arise in your family life that may benefit from counseling and/or spiritual support, our Pastors on staff are willing to assist you.

Withdrawing Children and Dis-Enrollment:

Families may choose to withdraw their child at any time, with a two week notice in writing. Upon withdrawing a child from the program, all personal items will be returned to the family on the child's last day. Arrangements to pay any remaining tuition balance will need to be agreed upon by the family and the director. Should a family re-apply to Noah's Ark for enrollment, registration fees will be applied and the family will be informed of the next possible opening.

Noah's Ark Preschool reserves the right to immediately terminate a child's enrollment for violations of Center policies and rules, Department of Human Services policies and rules, or Department of Health policies and rules. Parents and/or guardians agree to abide by the rules and guidelines that are outlined in this Handbook upon enrollment. Repeated or flagrant refusal to comply with the program's rules and guidelines will result in dis-enrollment. Noah's Ark Preschool reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment with a two week notice for any reason, if not able to adequately and safely meet the physical, academic, social, and emotional needs of the child.

Health Information

Health Procedures:

We will promote the health and safety of your child by providing a clean, smoke-free environment, safe toys, physical education, supervised physical activities, and maintain information for disease prevention resources for parents. For the protection of the children, we must adhere to and enforce rules on illness and administering medication.

Health Record Information:

Two health record forms must be completed for enrollment at Noah's Ark Preschool:

Immunization Record/Exemption Form - this record must give dates (month/day/year) of immunizations your child has received. It must be current and is due on admission. Records must be updated whenever your child receives additional immunizations. If your child is exempt from immunizations, the form must be properly completed and notarized.

Healthcare Summary - this form must include the date of the child's most recent physical exam (within six months of the first day of school) and be signed by the child's source of licensed health care, who must be a person other than a parent, even if they are a licensed health care provider. We are required by the Department of Human Resources to have the name, address, and telephone number of your child's physician in our files. We **MUST** have this information prior to attendance. *A new Healthcare Summary is required at the start of each school year for children who have previously attended Noah's Ark Preschool.*

Accidents/Injury:

In the event of an accident, appropriate procedures will be followed and parents will be notified. Reports are kept on all accidents and copies are released to the parent upon picking up the child at the end of the day. Emergency Contact Persons **MUST** be listed on enrollment paperwork. We are required to have the name, address, and phone number of at least one person, other than the parent/guardian and physician on file. Parents will also sign an emergency medical treatment form (provided by the center) in the event a child needs emergency care. If we cannot reach the parent/guardians, the child will be taken to the hospital listed on this form.

First Aid:

In the event of injury or illness, trained staff will administer first aid. We will stay with the child, and keep them as comfortable as possible. If necessary, 911 will be called and emergency services will transport your child to a medical facility designated by emergency services. A parent/guardian or emergency contact will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's source of health care may also be made. *Staff will not transport children.*

Prescription Medication:

Prescription medications will only be given with written authorization from the child's licensed health care provider (i.e., the prescription label) and parent/guardian. Please let your child's teacher know about medication your child is taking at home, too. Staff can help to look for side effects from the medication and let you know if any are seen.

In order to administer prescription medications, a completed Medication Authorization Form must be on file. Medications will only be given as prescribed by a licensed health care provider (physician, physician assistant, dentist, or certified nurse practitioner). The prescription must be

current, in the original container, and may be given only to the child whose name appears on the label. This includes over the counter dietary supplements.

If needed, please ask your pharmacy to split the medication into 2 containers—one for home and one for at school. Bring a copy of the drug information sheet that comes with the medication or write the common side effects on the Medication Permission Form. We will NOT administer medication that is unmarked, open, or in alternate containers.

For medications which are to be given long term, we will need an Individual Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP) signed by you and the child's licensed health care provider.

In the event that your child's medication needs require training, parents must discuss and explain the ICCPP with the director and classroom teachers, prior to the first day of school/as soon as medication is prescribed.

OTC Medication:

Noah's Ark Preschool does not administer non-prescription medication.

Illness:

A child who is vomiting; has a fever of more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit oral, 99 degrees Fahrenheit underarm or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit in ear, oral or on forehead; or has three loose bowel movements (diarrhea); or has signs or symptoms of any communicable disease, shall be isolated from the other children and given appropriate care by a staff member until picked up by a parent, guardian, or authorized pickup person. Parents must make arrangements to have their child picked up from school within one hour of being notified. If your child will be absent or has possibly been exposed to a communicable disease, please notify the director.

If your child is sent home due to fever, they must be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

Parents will be informed of communicable disease occurrences within classrooms or shared spaces that their child may have been exposed to. Families will be informed the same day or within 24 hours by email. Parents/guardians are required by state laws and our school policies to inform Noah's Ark Preschool within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends/holidays, if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease.

Exclusion of Ill Children from Care:

The department of Human Services requires that we exclude a child with an illness or condition that the Commissioner of Health determines to be contagious and a licensed health care provider determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others. We will follow the exclusion guidelines listed below which are taken from INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN CHILDCARE SETTINGS AND SCHOOLS: INFORMATION FOR DIRECTORS, CAREGIVERS, AND PARENTS OR GUARDIANS, prepared by Hennepin County Health Department. Please use the following chart to determine when your child can return to school, if presenting symptoms of an infectious disease.

Chickenpox	Until all blisters have dried into scabs; usually by day 6 after the rash began.
COVID-19	When all three criteria are met 1. 5 days since symptoms first appeared (or 5 days since specimen collection date for positive lab test if asymptomatic) <i>and</i> 2. 24 hours fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication <i>and</i> 3. Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.
Diarrhea	Until diarrhea stops or a medical exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a person's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form and/ or watery, bloody, or mucus-containing stools.
Mouth Sores, with Drooling	Until a medical exam indicates that the child may return, or until sores have healed.
Impetigo	Until 24 hours after treatment and sores are drying or improving.
Influenza	Until 23 hours after fever is gone, without the use of fever reducing medication, and the child is well enough to participate in routine activities.
Measles	Until 4 days after the rash appears. A child with measles should not attend any activities during this time period.
Meningococcal Disease	Until the child has been on appropriate antibiotics for at least 24 hours and is well enough to participate in routine activities.
Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)	If draining sores are present and cannot be completely covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage or if a person cannot maintain good personal hygiene. Children who are only colonized do not need to be excluded.
Mumps	Until 5 days after swelling begins.
Norovirus	Until 24 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have stopped.
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Until 5 days after appropriate antibiotic treatment begins. During this time the child should not participate in any childcare, school, or community activities. If not treated with 5 days of antibiotics, exclusion should be for 21 days after cough onset.
Pneumonia	Until fever is gone (without the aid of fever reducing medication) and the child is well enough to participate in routine activities.
Rash	Until a medical exam indicates that these symptoms are not those of a communicable disease that requires exclusion (i.e., chickenpox, measles, roseola, rubella, shingles, strep throat).
Respiratory Infection (Viral) or Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	Until fever is gone. without the aid of fever reducing medication and the child is well enough to participate in routine activities.
Ringworm (skin and scalp)	Until 24 hours after treatment has started.

Roseola	Until the fever is gone and other rash illnesses, especially measles, have been ruled out.
Rubella	Until 7 days after the rash appears.
Scabies	Until 24 hours after treatment begins.
Skin Infection	If draining sores are present and cannot be completely covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage or if the person cannot maintain good personal hygiene.
Streptococcal Infection (Strep Throat)	Until 12 hours after antibiotic treatment begins and the child is without fever for 24 hours.
Vomiting	Until 24 hours after vomiting has stopped. Vomiting is defined as two or more episodes in

In addition, children will be excluded from care if:

- The child in question is unable to participate in childcare program activities with reasonable comfort, including outdoor play.
- The child in question requires more care than the staff can provide, without compromising the health and safety of other children in care.

Toilet Training Policy:

Toilet training is a major undertaking for young children and marks a point in children's growth in which bodily awareness, self-control, and various development areas converge to allow children to use the bathroom successfully. It is no surprise then, that a milestone like this looks different and happens at a different time for each child. **Children enrolled at Noah's Ark Preschool MUST be toilet trained *completely* and be able to use the bathrooms in our facility *independently*.** Independent bathroom use means the child is able to communicate the need to use the bathroom, without excessive prompting, and when in the bathroom stall, they can remove pants and underwear, get themselves onto the toilet, wipe themselves, get down, and properly pull their clothing back up. Our staff is not equipped nor trained, nor do we have proper licensing to equip in changing diapers/pull ups, nor initiate or help in potty training. We understand that accidents may happen on occasion, and so we ask that parents send a spare change of clothes in their child's backpack each day. However, if toileting presents a significant challenge for an individual child and efforts to address toileting through a plan approved by the director fail, and cause an undue burden upon our staff, Noah's Ark Preschool reserves the right to suspend enrollment until toilet training is completed or to pursue dis-enrollment.

Special Needs

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to inform the preschool when their child has any special medical condition, needs or allergies, so that we can provide appropriate care and support. Noah's Ark Preschool strives to be a place of learning and growth through faith for all children. We include all children, regardless of ability, as long as appropriate supports and measures are put into place so as not to put an unreasonable burden on individual classrooms

and their respective teachers.

If your child has a special need and is (one of the following):

- *Eligible for case management through the state and has an Individual Service Plan (ISP)
- *Receiving services through the local school district and has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- *Determined by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or consulting psychologist to have a condition related to physical, social, or emotional development,

You will be asked to share the ISP, IEP and/or IFSP or other pertinent documents with us, prior to enrollment, or as soon as documents are made available, if the child is already a student at our center. In addition, state licensing regulations require us to develop an Individualized Child Care Program Plan (ICCPP) with you that will assist us in meeting your child's needs. Your cooperation in creating effective and appropriate approaches to caring for and supporting the development of your child is critical. This plan must be signed by you and your child's source of licensed health care as listed above, and be reviewed annually to ensure that necessary modifications are made.

If your child is to receive services off-site through the school district or a private provider, we ask that you share with us pertinent information and contact information for their providers, so that our staff may take guidance and advice from the specialists, to support your child in their learning and development goals.

If the special need requires that our staff be trained to perform a new skill, we ask that the parents or guardians arrange for this training, so that all staff working with the child are equipped.

Noah's Ark Preschool reserves the right to dis-enroll a student who requires more care and attention than our staff and teachers are equipped and trained to provide.

Nutrition Information

Meals and Snacks:

Noah's Ark Preschool provides a small morning snack to all students around 10:15AM. We always include two food groups in snack. 1% milk is offered to all students at snack. Water is offered periodically throughout the day to all children.

Students attending our full day Pre-K class, are required to pack a lunch every day, which they eat at approximately 12:00PM. Lunchboxes should be labeled with the child's name, and include an ice pack. We highly encourage families to prepare a healthy, well-balanced lunch for their child, that includes healthy protein (meat fish, egg, seed butter, etc.), vegetables, fruit, dairy and whole grains. Please avoid packing foods that contain too much fat and/or sugar, boxed meals (Lunchables), sweetened drinks, excessive dessert, etc. We also ask that you avoid packing the following choking hazards:

- Hotdog-like products (unless cut into small, square pieces)
- Chunks of meat (unless cut into bite sized pieces)
- Whole grapes, cherry tomatoes (unless cut into quarters)
- Raw cherries with pits, or other foods with seeds (unless pits/seeds are removed)
- Olives, pickles
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Peanuts and other nuts/seeds
- Hard candy/large, chewy candy

Food Brought From Home:

If food is being brought for a class activity, it must be commercially produced and in its original, unopened package. There are often allergies within classrooms, so please speak with your child's teacher before bringing a snack to share.

Tuition Information**Tuition and Fees:**

For current rates and fees, please consult an up-to-date *rate and fee sheet*, provided by Noah's Ark Preschool. Registration fee is due upon submitting the enrollment application; this is a non-refundable fee. Discounts are available for parents of multiple children and St. John's Lutheran Church Members.

You may withdraw from Noah's Ark Preschool whenever you wish, after giving the director two (2) week written notice. Should you wish to apply for re-enrollment, the registration fee is payable and admission is contingent upon available space.

Tuition is paid through our church management system, Breeze. Payments are to be set up for monthly withdrawal, between the first and tenth of each month (September through May). The process to set up these monthly payments can be found on the *rate and fee sheet*. We do not accept monthly check or cash payments. Cash and/or checks are only accepted when paying in full for the school year.

Noah's Ark Preschool reserves the right to suspend enrollment for students whose account goes unpaid and no arrangements are made to pay off the balance in a timely manner.

No credit or refund of tuition will be given for the days that the preschool is officially closed. Tuition is the same for each month, regardless of holidays, illness, or child absence.

Scholarship Application:

If your family is experiencing financial distress, please contact the director, to discuss how we may be able to assist. Applications for tuition scholarship are available upon request, and are reviewed by the Board of Directors. Funds are determined by what is available from donations each year. Applicants who are approved for scholarship will agree to a separate Tuition Agreement, and are expected to maintain 90% attendance. Failure to comply with the terms of the scholarship agreement may result in loss of scholarship funding.

Late Pick Up:

Our goal is to care for your child in the best way possible. When it is time to go home, and nobody has come to pickup a child, this can cause anxiety and distress. It is not only unfair to the child, but also to our staff, and so for these reasons, a stringent late pick up fee will be assessed. If your child is not picked up from preschool within the 15 minutes of their session ending, a \$5.00 late fee will be charged, and then again for every 15-minute interval thereafter. In the event that an emergency arises and you are going to be late to pick up your child, please call the school as soon as possible.

Should a child remain at the preschool an hour after class has ended and every attempt to contact parents, guardians, and emergency contacts, has been made, CPS and the Buffalo Police Department will be contacted to collect the child. A note will be left on the preschool entrance door with information relating to which agency has the child and who to contact to pick up the child.

Behavior Guidelines and Policies

Behavior Management:

We believe that all children can behave appropriately at Noah's Ark Preschool. A loving and Christian discipline will be used in the classroom to establish a routine that provides the optimal learning environment. Setting limits and boundaries help the child, and so we enforce basic school behavior rules. These rules include: walking feet indoors (except in the Family Life Center, during recess), gentle hands with others, showing respect for others and following directions. Noah's Ark Preschool prohibits punishment that is humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful to a child. Instead, we offer redirection and positive reinforcement.

Teachers are directly responsible for guiding children's behavior and will use approved methods of classroom management including:

- Setting clear, consistent expectations for age-appropriate classroom behavior
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity
- Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations
- Guiding children to resolve conflicts
- Modeling skills to help children resolve their own problems

If a child engages in improper activity, we will explain to him/her why his/her actions are unacceptable to those around him/her. The teacher may ask the child to sit apart from others if efforts to redirect or resolve problem behavior fail. This is a time for the child to calm down and decide when he/she is ready to rejoin the group. When a child continues to engage in problem behavior, parents will be notified.

Danger to self (head banging, self-biting or scratching) or aggression to another child or adult that results in physical pain or harm, including kicking, biting, hitting or scratching will be documented on an incident report form and given to the parent or caregiver. Repeated incident report forms within a short amount of time will result in a parent-teacher conference either in person or over the phone.

Noah's Ark Preschool will work with parents/guardians to modify and eliminate undesirable/unsafe behaviors within our scope of training and skill. If necessary, individualized behavior plans will be implemented to modify children's behavior. Noah's Ark Preschool reserves the right to disenroll a child if attempts to resolve behavior issues have failed repeatedly and the child is a danger to him/herself and/or others, or disrupts the learning experience of others to an unacceptable degree.

Safety and Security

The safety of all children attending Noah's Ark Preschool is our top priority. Through strict compliance with licensing standards and years of experience in caring for children, the program has developed and continues to develop approaches and practices to keep children safe within the program under any and all circumstances.

Entry to the Building:

All families will be given an access code for entry into the building. Please take care in how these codes are kept track and with whom they are shared. If for any reason you forget your code or your code is not working, please ring the doorbell on the keypad for entry.

Although it is courteous to hold the door open for others behind you, we ask that you are cautious of who you allow into the building as you enter. If you do not recognize a person trying to enter

the building, or if you have concerns about the behavior/demeanor of anyone attempting to enter, please inform the director or a staff person of either the preschool or St. John's Lutheran Church immediately.

Fire/Tornado Drills:

Fire drills are conducted monthly, and a record is kept with the date and time taken to evacuate. Tornado drills are conducted once per month in April, May and September, with a record of the date and time taken to shelter kept on file. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom and reviewed yearly. In the event of an emergency, the classroom teacher is equipped with first aid supplies, battery operated radio, flashlight, blanket, and prescription medications needed for children on file.

Child Custody:

In the event that there is a custody agreement in place for your child that limits or prohibits when and to whom your child(ren) is released, it is your responsibility to provide copies of official court decisions. We will hold these documents in your child's file and instruct staff on following any rulings issued within the documents. Noah's Ark Preschool does not have the space or staffing to facilitate supervised visitation.

Safe Pick Up:

All children at Noah's Ark Preschool are entitled to be picked up and transported in a way that is safe. If at any time an individual who has come to pick up a child is behaving in an erratic, violent, or inebriated manner, Noah's Ark Preschool reserves the right to not allow the person in question to pick up a child. Local law enforcement will be contacted if the person in question resists. Alternate pick up options will be explored if the person in question complies and agrees not to take the child off-site.

Maltreatment of Minors/Mandated Reporting Policy:

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect:

-Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect. If you work in a licensed facility (i.e., Noah's Ark Preschool staff and teachers), you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility.
-If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected physically or sexually abused within the preceding three (3) years, you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report:

-If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
-All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake Line at 651-431-6600.
-Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the Wright County Child Protection Services at 763-682-7400.
-If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules governing the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at 651-431-6500.

What to report:

-Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556), and should be attached to this policy.

-A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

-An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to report:

-A mandated reporter who knows of or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor.

-A mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, as well as unlicensed Personal Care Provider organizations.

Retaliation is prohibited:

-An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made.

-The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review:

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within thirty (30) calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- (i) related policies and procedures were followed;
- (ii) the policies and procedures were adequate
- (iii) there is a need for additional staff training
- (iv) the reported event is similar to past events with the children or services involved;
- and
- (v) there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed:

The internal review will be completed by the director. If the director is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Noah's Ark Preschool Board of Directors will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Policy and Procedures Availability:

-The reporting policies and procedures must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request.

-The Division of Licensing recommends that parents with children currently enrolled in a child care program are informed of the development of the reporting policies and procedures, and are provided with an opportunity to request information.

Transportation:

Noah's Ark preschool does not offer transportation, but we recommend contacting Trailblazer Transit for assistance with this, as they may drop off and pick up at Noah's Ark Preschool. When planned activities at our program (i.e., field trips) require transportation, the methods used will be

in accordance with the Department of Human Services and Minnesota Law. Staff and teachers of Noah's Ark Preschool will not transport students.

Photography, Research and Marketing:

Noah's Ark Preschool will obtain written permission for all published photography, experimental research or marketing that involves any child enrolled. This includes, but is not limited to classroom photography, event photography, marketing and advertising to promote our school, and experimental research projects for student teaching that would involve or include any child at the program, past or present.

Parental Grievance:

Noah's Ark Preschool is a nonprofit organization, as a ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church. It is governed by a Board of Directors, of which serving members are also active members of the church.

When a parent or guardian has a concern about an aspect of our preschool program, we will take every step to help resolve the issue, keeping the safety and well-being of the children and staff a priority. It is preferred that the concern is first addressed with the staff member involved. If a satisfactory resolution is not met or you do not feel comfortable talking with the involved staff member, please contact the director. All concerns and issues will be handled confidentially.

Care Procedures and Policies

Backpacks and Totes:

All children attending Noah's Ark Preschool should have a personal backpack or tote to bring to and from school each day. We have found that *full-sized backpacks* work best to hold the essential projects, gear, and artwork that may be sent home from school. Please be sure to mark your child's bag with his or her full name, and check them regularly.

Clothing and Personal Items:

All personal items that your child may use during the course of the day should be labeled with their first and last name, and stored in your child's backpack, or on their hook in the hallway.

Please have your child wear play clothes that are comfortable and easy for your child to manage. Clothing that is free from complicated fastenings, and may get messy during art projects, painting, playing outside, etc. is recommended. We ask that footwear is sturdy, and will stay on your child's feet during play. Tennis shoes or other laced or buckled shoes are preferred. Please do not send your child in flip-flops.

In the instance of a bathroom accident, bowel movements will be dumped. However, due to regulations, clothing will not be washed or rinsed out. Soiled clothing will be placed in the child's backpack in a plastic bag. Please keep a spare change of clothes in a clearly labeled Ziploc bag, in your child's backpack. If for whatever reason, your child does not have a sufficient change of clothes, Noah's Ark Preschool keeps a limited amount of spare clothing on-site for emergencies. Borrowed clothing should be washed, dried, and returned promptly.

Please do not send your child to school with items that present a potential risk to others or are a source of extreme distraction. This may include coins, jewelry, new toys (especially those with small parts), etc. Noah's Ark Preschool serves children of a variety of ages and abilities, and we strive to keep our rooms safe for every child.

Birthdays:

We love to celebrate birthdays at Noah's Ark Preschool! If your child's birthday falls during the summer months, please be prepared to celebrate their half birthday at school. As your child's birthday approaches, their teacher will be in touch with you about a small class celebration. If you choose to provide a special snack, it must be commercially packaged and brought to school sealed and in its original packaging.

Class Pictures:

School pictures are taken in the Fall. Dates will be announced and parents will be informed as it draws near.

Learning and Developing Together

Our Dedicated Staff:

We strive to ensure the highest quality care for your child, which would not be possible without the wonderful individuals who work for Noah's Ark Preschool. Our teachers and staff bring a diverse pool of talents and skills to our program, which enriches the experience of each and every child in our care. Staff are hired through a process of careful deliberation by our Preschool Director and Board of Directors, who follow guidelines set to establish a body of professionals who carry out the ministry of the Church and use accepted teaching practices, all while following Minnesota learning standards. All staff must pass a background check through the Minnesota Department of Human Services in order to be hired by Noah's Ark Preschool.

All staff receive training throughout the year, focused on child development, working with children with special needs, working in multicultural settings, ensuring the safety and health of children, and many other topics to complete the required professional development hours. All staff are required to join Minnesota's professional development organization, Develop, in order to track their professional growth, while providing them with opportunities to seek further education and advancement. Noah's Ark Preschool seeks to retain great teachers and as such, careful attention is paid to placing qualified staff in positions that reflect these qualifications.

Daily Programs and Routines:

Daily activities and schedules vary based on the classroom your child is in. Each classroom has their own daily schedule, which are available to parents upon request. Students will participate in a number of things, from 9-11:30AM including, but not limited to: Morning Meeting; Learning Centers; Large-group Bible Lesson; Bathroom Break; Chapel; Snack; Movement; Small Group Learning; Art Projects; Story Time; Music; and Sharing. Students in the Full Day Program may also have: Gym/Outdoor Play; Lunch; Extended Literacy; and Creative Arts.

We believe that hearing God's Word is an important part of the development of a child because of what it teaches a child about God's love for the world, especially shown in Jesus Christ. We also believe that a child's knowledge of the love and acceptance of God in Christ is the best way of developing each child's unique personality.

Noah's Ark Preschool provides experiences and activities that will meet your child's spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, and physical needs. Your child will be guided to start taking part in small and large group activities, and will also have time to experiment and create under the watchful and loving care of our staff.

Although Kindergarten preparation is not the sole purpose of Noah's Ark Preschool, our staff does pay special attention to present skills and knowledge that make the transition to elementary school as straightforward as possible for young children. Younger preschoolers will learn

foundational skills that build towards more complex skills focused on by older preschoolers. Our older preschoolers will continue to work on skills to prepare them for Kindergarten as they near the age when they will graduate from our program.

A graduation ceremony is held every Spring for students who are "Moving on Up" to a new class, as well as to celebrate those that will be transitioning out of our program and into Kindergarten.

Daily Schedule:

9:00AM-11:30AM classes will include a number of activities, including:

- Morning Meeting/Calendar/Weather
- Learning Centers
- Bible Story/Daily Lesson (Weekly Chapel Visits)
- Bathroom Break/Snack
- Fine Motor/Gross Motor Skills
- Small Group
- Art
- Story Time/Music/Sharing
- Tidy/Closing Circle

Our Pre-K class runs from 9:00AM-2:00PM and includes the above activities, plus:

- Recess—outside or in the Gym
- Lunch
- Enrichment Activities, which extend the daily lessons and themes
- Creative Arts

Group Sizes and Ratios:

Licensing regulations are set by the state of Minnesota for Child Care Centers, and dictate how many children may occupy individual classrooms, as well as how many staff members must be present to properly supervise respective groups. The regulations impacting group sizes and child-to-teacher ratios for Preschool classrooms (ages 33 months to Kindergarten entry) is 1 teacher per 10 preschoolers, with groups not to exceed 26.

St. John's Lutheran Church

If you are searching for a church home, we would love to have you at St. John's! We invite you and your family to participate in Weekend Services, Church Activities, Bible Studies, and Life Groups. This is a great way for your child to see their school friends outside of the classroom, as well as interact with the church staff, and even some of their teachers!

Weekend Services are Saturday at 5PM, and Sunday at 8AM and 10:30AM, with Bible Class and Sunday School from 9:15-10:15. Contact the church office with any questions at info@stjohnsbufflo.org or 763-682-1883.

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All forms mentioned in this Handbook can be found at <https://www.stjohnsbuffalo.org/preschool/parent-resources/>