

Gethsemane  
Lutheran  
Preschool Parent  
Handbook  
2024-2025  
School year  
2025 Summer

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Accreditation.....2**

**Welcome.....2**

**Goals of Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool.....3**

**Spiritual Exposures.....4**

**Enrollment.....4**

**Look at Them Learning.....5**

**Learning Goals and Objectives of Key Experiences.....6**

**Discipline Policy.....7**

**Conflict Resolution & Grievances.....8**

**Hours of Operation.....9**

**Campus Visitors.....10**

**Miscellaneous.....11**

**Food and Nutrition.....14**

**Physical Activities ..... 14**

**Health & Safety Rules.....15**

**Parental Role.....19**

**Financial Responsibilities.....20**

**Gethsemane Preschool Program Parent Agreement.....21**

## Accredited Preschool

Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool is accredited through The Lutheran School Accreditation Commission. This provides validation that we provide a quality education to all students who attend. We will continue to grow and change as we work through the next steps to keep our accreditation current. Gethsemane is now listed on the Texas Education Association as an accredited school.

## AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Be positive when you speak with your child about school.

Do not tell them too much; they do not know what you are talking about if they have not been to school.

Arrive on time; some children feel very insecure and threatened when arriving late and an activity is in progress.

Spend a **brief** moment in the car and then cheerfully and in assuring tones bid good-bye to your child.

Some children will take time to adjust; it is much easier for the staff to encourage this adjustment after you are gone. Lingering good-byes are not helpful to the child, staff or parent.

Trust us! Hopefully you have asked questions and observed Gethsemane and are now ready to trust us with your child: We will honor that trust!

We place this year in the hands of our loving Father and look expectantly for His blessings!





Welcome to our Gethsemane church and school family! We are glad to have you with us and hope you will soon feel comfortable and realize that you are a vital part of Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool.

## **Our Purpose**

- To love each child and assist in building a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- To assist families by providing a program of Christian education with age appropriate faith development.
- To develop the whole child by enriching his/her needs through guidance of qualified and caring teachers.

## **Goals of the Preschool Program at Gethsemane**

- To provide a loving Christian environment and a caring, nurturing staff to work with each child as a unique individual
- To provide experiences which allow each child to develop or grow in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ
- To assist children in the exploration of feelings, attitudes and behaviors thereby helping children develop an understanding of themselves and others
- To build confidence of each child by teaching new skills
- To prepare each child for the next level of learning

## **Philosophy**

The Gethsemane Preschool endeavors to meet the needs of the whole child. All aspects of each child's development are considered of equal importance. These areas of growth include spiritual, social, intellectual, physical and emotional. Each student is given the opportunity to learn and do what is appropriate for his/her age, interest and level of maturity.

The teaching staff of Gethsemane Preschool is committed to providing learning environments that are age-appropriate. This approach allows individual students to grow through active exploration and investigation, based on sensory stimulation and hands-on manipulatives used in learning centers. This active learning process allows each child's skills to develop to his or her fullest potential. These early years lay a quality foundation for each child's future educational success. Our educational process is committed to leading each child to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

## **Mission**

The mission of Gethsemane Preschool shall be to provide an atmosphere in which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is promoted and to implement a program of quality Christian education encouraging development in every area of each child's life: spiritual, academic, social and physical.

Gethsemane Preschool seeks to fulfill its mission by establishing a program that provides quality education by:

- Teaching children the way of salvation through Jesus Christ as it is found in Deuteronomy 6:6-7, and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions.
- Making application of God's Word to the child's daily life and to prepare him or her for a commitment to a family of believers.
- Supporting and strengthening parenthood and home life.
- Using daily Christian relationships as a powerful tool in building character and training in Christian living
  - To promote Christian citizenship.
  - To maintain friendly relations with neighbors.
  - To witness to our faith.
  - To seek to draw un-churched individuals for Christ.
  - To encourage community involvement.

## **Spiritual Exposures**

The overall goal is that our students will know Jesus as their Savior. Each classroom will have daily Bible stories which may include songs, puppets, crafts, object lessons, and finger plays. It is our desire to nurture the child with God's love.

### **Goals:**

- To develop a personal relationship with God.
- To share God's love in relationships with others.
- To appreciate God's wonder in our relationships with the world.



## **Enrollment**

### **Non Discriminatory Policy**

Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Gethsemane Preschool is a ministry of Gethsemane Lutheran Church. We are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and will

meet or exceed the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers.

Children who are between 3 months to Pre-K are eligible to enroll during the school year. Our summer program is designed for families of children currently enrolled at Gethsemane between 3 months to Pre-K.

### **Admission Priority**

Order of Priority

1. Members of Gethsemane Lutheran Church
2. Siblings of students already enrolled in Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool
3. Member of another LCMS Church
4. Members of the community

### **Look at Them Learning!**

#### **Learning with Art Materials**

As children work with art materials, they make many choices. They visually discriminate between colors as they draw and paint, between shapes as they make collages and work with construction paper cutouts, and between textures as they work with fabric scraps. This ability to visually discriminate is a skill children need in the early stages of reading in order to discriminate between forms. The children also exercise the small muscles in their hand and fingers as they work with crayons, scissors, paintbrushes and manipulatives. Art materials provide children with a safe way of expressing thoughts and feelings that they are not prepared to verbalize.

#### **Learning with Manipulatives**

The children will develop fine motor skills as they work with various manipulatives. These fine motor skills prepare children to hold and control pencils when later forming letters and words.

#### **Learning through Block Play**

The children gain skill in estimation as they consider how much space they will need for a block structure, how many blocks they will need to complete a block structure and how many blocks they will need in order to build a tower as tall as their neighbors. Children learn about balance and classifying as they group blocks according to size and shape.

#### **Learning with Books**

Children begin to understand that the symbols we recognize as letters have meaning, that sentences are read in a left-to-right pattern and that illustrations, as well as words, can be "read" for meaning. They also develop language skills as they talk about the contents of the books. They learn to use language to retell a story in sequence.

### **Learning with Puzzles**

Children will begin to understand the relationship between part and whole.

### **Learning through Dramatic Play**

Dramatic play offers children safe avenues to explore their fears, anger and anxieties. By pretending to be doctors, kings, ladies, or anything to their liking, they are given the opportunity to work through many of the issues they confront in their own lives.

### **Learning through Outdoor Play and Gym Play**

As children climb, run and slide, they are talking, using language to create rules and singing rhymes. They also learn to work at and resolve dilemmas such as who will have the next turn on the slide, trike or with a ball in the gym. Finally, the children will develop large muscles in the arms and legs through their play.

### **Learning through Group Time**

Children learn to operate in a large group setting. The children learn to sit in a group and listen to the teacher and other children talk. Attention span increases, social skills develop (such as keeping hands to oneself) and the child's participation helps develop self-esteem and self confidence.

### **Bible**

Each week children will have an opportunity to experience the Bible story of the week with a dedicated teacher as they would in Sunday school. Our Bible teacher chooses activities that reflect the Bible story of the week.

### **Sign Language**

Our youngest non-verbal children will have the opportunity to be exposed to basic sign language. Lessons will be taught at an age appropriate level following the themes of the child's classroom.

### **Library**

Children will have the opportunity to experience a library like they will when they are in elementary school. Our librarian chooses books that reflect seasons, themes and special projects for each class.

### **Infants**

Infants will have the opportunity to have tummy time to work on the development of muscles and practice crawling. Infants will not be restricted in a device for more than 15 minutes unless they are eating or being transported.

## **Safe sleep Children under 12 months**

Children may not have anything in their pack and play with them other than a tight fitting sheet. Children can not be swaddled while sleeping at school. Children who are unable to roll over will be placed on their back to sleep. Children will not be placed in a restrictive device to sleep.

## **Learning Goals and Objectives of Key Experiences:**

All learning goals and objectives are classroom specific. We will provide developmental checklists three times per academic school year. These will give you an idea of what your child has accomplished throughout the school year. The Developmental checklist was created using Little Texans Big Future and the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills).

## **Discipline Policy**

A word concerning discipline:in accordance with our beliefs – God’s love and forgiveness will be the motivating factor in our interactions. The safety of the child and playmates necessitate boundaries in which the child can feel secure. A certain amount of structure, not to inhibit creativity, but to allow for a day that runs smoothly, will be taught the first several weeks until the children know what is expected. From experience, we have found that this allows more time and freedom to pursue teachable moments throughout the year.

Per the guidelines set by the Texas Health and Human Services in the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers, the following policies will be upheld.

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child’s level of understanding; and
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Staff will use only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child’s age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child’s age.



There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.

The staff of Gethsemane will make every attempt to redirect negative behavior. If negative behavior persists, a conference will be scheduled with the parent, teacher and the director. In some cases, behavior may indicate developmental delays and could necessitate evaluation by a qualified specialist. This evaluation may be required for your child to continue in our program. Any child who continually jeopardizes the safety other children, and/or staff will be asked to leave the program if corrective measures are not successful.

## **Conflict Resolution & Grievances**

Students, parents, teachers, and administrators at Gethsemane are encouraged to work in partnership toward the common goal of excellence in Christian education. This requires a climate of respect, understanding, and tolerance. When questions or conflicts arise, they should be addressed courteously and directly with the individual involved. The Biblical directive for conflict resolution at Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool is found in Matthew 18: 15-17.

*If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

It is clear from Scripture that a parent is to discuss concerns regarding a teacher's decisions or actions directly with the teacher. Other people should not be involved and the parent should avoid making negative comments to the student.

The following steps should be followed for any grievance or matter of concern at Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool:

- Parent and teacher conference
- Parent and Director conference
- Appeal to the Preschool Board

### **Questions and Concerns**

Parents may email, use Brightwheel, call or meet face-to-face with the director to discuss any questions or concerns about any of Gethsemane policies or procedures. Feedback is always welcome and appreciated.

### **Hours of Operation**

Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or an extended day from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Children will be signed in and out by the parent through the Brightwheel app.**

Each classroom will have a weekly attendance form that is updated by the classroom teachers with the time children arrive and depart.

Part time classes are available; parents who have their child in the part time program must adhere to the same days agreed upon at registration. **There are no make-up days for absences, illness or holidays.**

Morning care 8:00 to 9:00  
School hours 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
After School care 2:00 to 3:00

Carline Hours:  
Morning Drop off:  
Before School care 8:00 to 8:15  
School Drop off 8:40 to 8:55

Afternoon pick up:  
School Day 1:40 to 1:55  
After School care 2:40 to 2:55

If parents or nannies would like to pick up during the school day we ask that you come to the child's classroom to do so. The teachers will only bring children out to you during designated carline times.



A late fee of \$5.00 per minute will be charged for every minute you are late past the child's **scheduled** pick up time. Any late fees will be documented and added to your monthly statement. If you have an emergency and will be late, please call the office at 713-688-5227 and send a message through Brightwheel. Excessive tardies for the 2pm pick up will result in the monthly extended day fee being charged to your account. Excessive tardies for the 3pm pick up will result in removal from the extended day option.

### **Signing In and Out**

Children will only be released to their parents and those adults listed on their emergency information form on file. Student access tag must be visibly displayed in the front window prior to the child being released. People who do not pick up your child on a normal basis and are on the emergency information form for release should be prepared to show their driver's license or picture ID. All persons picking up a student must have the student access tag. Parents may also give written permission via e-mail or Brightwheel.

## **Campus Visitors**

### **Custodial Parents**

Custodial parents are welcome to visit the school at any time without an appointment. Please check in with the office. If you would like to schedule a conference, please contact your child's teacher and/or the director via e-mail or Brightwheel.

### **Non-Custodial Parents**

A non-custodial parent will be permitted to participate in routine school activities involving parents, unless restricted by court order.

The non-custodial parent is the parent who has neither the right to designate the child's residence nor the right to receive child support under the divorce decree or court order. Gethsemane reserves the right to make the decision as to who is non-custodial for purposes of this policy.

The non-custodial parent may not visit the student on campus during the school day nor may the student be released to the non-custodial parent without written permission from the custodial parent. A certified copy of the court order restricting the rights of the non-custodial parent must be provided to the school office if the custodial parent wishes to prohibit the distribution of information to or restrict school visitations by the non-custodial parent. A student may, however, be released to the non-custodial parent if the decree specifies that visits begin at the time school is released but only on days of possession.

## Miscellaneous

### Gang-Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty under state law.

### Contact Information for Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – Child Care Licensing

TDFPS –hhs.texas.gov  
Licensing – 713-287-3238  
1330 E. 40th Houston Tx 77022  
Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-252-5400



### Minimum Standards and Most Recent Licensing Report

Parents can review a copy of the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers and a copy of our most recent Licensing Inspection Report. These items are available any time and are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway across from classroom one. They are also available online at [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Search\\_Texas\\_Child\\_Care/ppFacilityDetails.asp?ptype=DC&fid=154584&resCareFlag=F](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilityDetails.asp?ptype=DC&fid=154584&resCareFlag=F)

### Holidays

Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool will generally be closed for the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Week
- Christmas and New Year's Holiday ( generally two weeks)
- MLK Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday & Easter Monday
- Early Childhood Conference
- Spring Break
- Memorial Day
- Week between school and summer camp
- Independence Day

The dates for these holidays will vary. Please check the current calendar for the days we will be closed each school year. **There is no reduction in tuition or make-up days for holidays or in-service closings.** We will also be closed between the last day of summer camp and the first day of the new school year. Parents will be notified in advance of these dates.

## **Clothing**

Please dress your child for active (sometimes messy) play. While normal precautions will be taken, accidents can happen. Your child should come to school in comfortable, washable play clothes. **Shoes such as flip-flops, crocs, sandals and boots are not a safe option for active children at school.** We have found that tennis shoes are the safest for the children, please send shoes that are teacher friendly.

On nice winter days we will go outside, so please send your child to school in coat, hat and gloves or mittens. Our rooms and gym are adequately heated but long sleeves shirts in the winter are a good idea. **Please put your child's name on all items that you expect to be returned to you.**

## **Lost and Found**

Unidentified found articles will be placed in the church and school lost and found area. Please check with the director or church secretary for missing items. Most missing items can be claimed at drop off and pick up time. Valuable items such as money, jewelry, wallets, and purses should be turned in to the school office for safekeeping until they are claimed.

## **Toys**

**Parents are asked to help ensure that toys are not brought to school.** Many toys have small parts that could be a choking hazard to our younger students. If your child brings one of these items to school, they will be placed in the child's lunch kit to be brought home at the end of the day.

## **Inclement Weather**

School closings due to bad weather or other emergency conditions are announced through Brightwheel and e-mail messages. **Typically, Gethsemane closes when two or more area districts close.**



## **Children's Biting Guidelines**

Biting is common in group settings of young children, though when it happens it is disturbing to parents and caregivers. Reasons for biting include the following possibilities:

- Children lack words to express themselves.
- Children explore their environment orally;
- Since children explore their world orally, they may sometimes defend themselves orally or show affection orally;
- Teething children may bite because it feels good;
- Children learn through imitation;
- Children feel threatened or overwhelmed;
- Children feel frustrated or angry;

For the child who is bitten:

- Appropriate First Aid will be rendered by the teacher or other designated adult;
- The Director will be notified;
- An Illness/Incident Report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. The original will be placed in the child's file in the Director's office;
- Depending upon the severity of the bite, the child's parents will be contacted.

For the child who bites:

- An Illness/Incident Report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. The original will be placed in the child's file in the Director's office.
- If the biting persists and the staff is unable to effect any change in the behavior, the child's parents will be contacted and a plan will be developed in cooperation with the parents and child's teacher. The identity of both children will remain confidential.

### **Contracting Teachers**

If a parent chooses to hire a teacher to babysit or transport children that is between the parent and the teacher, Gethsemane Lutheran Church and Preschool is not liable for anything that occurs during the contracted time. You will need to add the teachers to the pick-up list and also understand that once the teacher has clocked out from the preschool we are not liable for any type of accident or injury.

### **Food and Nutrition**

#### **Please note we are a nut free facility**

Parents are responsible for providing their child's morning snack and lunch and afternoon snack. When packing your child's lunch, Gethsemane is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs. Please try to avoid or limit foods high in sugar content. In order to prevent choking, hotdogs should be cut lengthwise and grapes or small tomatoes must be cut in half. When in doubt please cut or dice any food that may pose a choking hazard. **Lunchtime is a busy time. We do not have enough hands to cut up each child's lunch.**

Cold foods should be packed with an ice pack as **we do not have refrigerators available to store children's lunches**. Children are encouraged, but never forced, to eat their food. Please refrain from sending candy or popcorn.

### **Class Parties and Birthdays**

Gethsemane students celebrate several special occasions during the year with class parties. Teachers may also allow a parent to bring a class treat for a child's birthday. Parents are asked to please refrain from having flowers, balloons, or anything delivered to students at school. If bringing a treat, please make arrangements with the teacher. All treats should be store bought and prepackaged with the ingredients listed on the package. Invitations to out-of-school birthday celebrations and parties should be mailed, unless the entire class is invited. This simple courtesy will prevent many hurt feelings.

**Any parent who brings food into a classroom party, etc. should be aware that we are a nut free facility: Please check with your child's teacher to ensure that there are no other dietary concerns in your child's classroom.**

### **Breastfeeding**

We at Gethsemane understand that breastfeeding supports optimal health and development for our infants. We provide a comfortable place that enables a mother to sit and breastfeed her child. In addition, you have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk while your child is in our care.

### **Physical Activity**

Physical activity is important at all ages but specifically to preschool age children because it strengthens children's bones, muscles, heart and lungs, improves children's coordination, balance, posture and flexibility, helps children stay at a healthy weight and reduces children's risk of developing heart disease, cancer and type-2 diabetes later in life.

All children will have the opportunity to play outside weather permitting. All recess times in the morning are 30 minutes long and if children stay for extended day, until 3pm, will have up to an hour of additional recess time. Children who leave at 2pm will have 15 minutes of recess time between the time they wake up and parent pick up at 2pm. In the event of bad weather we offer gross motor play in the gym. Physical activity will not be withheld as a form of punishment. Infants younger than 17 months will have an opportunity to be outside, however the duration will vary based on the tolerance of the class.

In order to ensure the safety of the children while outside and in the gym all children need to wear closed toe shoes<sub>1</sub> with socks.

## Health & Safety Rules

### Rest Time

The state of Texas requires any center open for more than five hours to provide a rest time for children. Parents need to provide a nap mat that **does not** have straps longer than six inches for their child to rest on. Rest time will begin after lunch and end at 1:30.

### Illness or Accidents

Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool does not have the facilities or personnel to offer medical care beyond routine first aid treatment. If a student is injured or becomes ill at school, office personnel will comfort the child and contact a parent or guardian to pick him up. *It is expected that the parent will do this within an hour of being contacted.* Parents are responsible to ensure that each child has a current emergency response form on file with the school office that includes all parent contact numbers and several alternative numbers. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, an ambulance may be called before the parent is notified. Our primary concern is for the health and safety of the child.

Parents will be called to pick up a child if any of the following are observed:

1. fever of 99.0 degrees or higher;
2. vomiting or diarrhea;
3. coughing or signs of upper respiratory illness;
4. a significant rash;
5. ongoing complaints of pain;
6. any injury that appears serious;
7. pink eye.



**Our school is also required by the law to uphold the following recommendations and guidelines provided by the Texas State Department of Health. Both staff and parents must comply for the health of all of our children.**

1. Chicken Pox: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. The last crop of lesions must be scabbed over.
2. Diphtheria: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
3. Hepatitis: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
4. Impetigo: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. All lesions must be healed, and child must be examined by the director prior to returning to school.
5. Measles: You must have physician's permit to re-enter school. Child must be free from rash.



6. Mononucleosis: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
7. Mumps: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
8. Pink Eye: May return to school after using physician prescribed eye drops/ointment for 24 hours.
9. Ringworm of scalp and skin: Child may return to school with a permit from the physician, provided prescribed treatment has been initiated, and the area is covered.
10. Streptococcal Infection: Also referred to as Strep throat, Scarletina, or Scarlet fever. Child may return to school with a physician's permit, after having been free from symptoms (fever, sore throat, and rash) and on antibiotic therapy for at least 24 hours.
11. Tuberculosis: Child must have a physician's permit and must be taking the prescribed medication.
12. Whooping Cough: Child must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
13. COVID-19: Child must have a negative test or physician's permit to re-enter school

**Children with contagious diseases must remain at home until a doctor releases them to return to school. Children with fever should be kept at home until they are fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours.** When your child has a fever, keep him home for at least 24 hours after the fever has broken. For example, if the fever breaks in the afternoon on Monday, do not send your child to school until Wednesday. The temperature should remain below 99.0 for at least 24 hours. Parents are asked to use common sense and consideration when deciding whether a child is well enough to attend school. **Although it may be inconvenient to keep a sick child home, the well being of the child, his classmates, and his teachers must take first priority.**

### **Medication Policy**

We do not dispense medication. We will keep your child's emergency medication on hand with a physician medical action plan. Please provide a medical action plan. We will keep one in your child's file in the director's office and your child's teacher will also keep a copy on hand in the classroom. Please leave any emergency medication with your child's teacher in its original packaging and a dosing cup with your child's first and last name clearly written on it.

### **Sunscreen and Insect Repellent**

We do not apply sunscreen or insect repellent at school. Please apply these before your child comes to school.

### **Diaper Cream**

Diaper Cream should be labeled with child's first and last name. Written permission to apply diaper cream should be given either through Brightwheel or a note sent in with the child.

### **Screen time**

Children will not be using a TV or other screen while on campus. We feel they need to have hands on experiences.

### **Medical Records and Health Requirements**

State law mandates that immunization and health records be maintained on each child enrolled in school. Parents must notify the school office of any changes in a child's health status, new medications, new food allergies, emergency phone numbers or addresses, or physician.

Parents must supply a complete immunization health record from a licensed physician. Immunizations must be current according to the Texas Department of Health requirements. You can view these requirements on the website at [dshs.texas.gov](http://dshs.texas.gov).

To claim exclusion for reasons of conscience including a religious belief, a signed affidavit must be obtained from the Texas department of Health, Immunization Division in Austin and presented to the School. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period.

To claim an exclusion for medical reasons the student must present a statement signed by the child's physician (MD or DO), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child. Unless it is written in the statement that a life-long condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

**Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool CANNOT accept any child who shows signs of illness. We have a responsibility to the wellbeing of children and staff in attendance.**

Being sick is not fun for anyone. While it can be inconvenient to keep children out of school when they are sick, please be considerate of the other students and teachers. Should your child have anything that is contagious, please notify the school office as soon as possible so appropriate notices can be sent home.

## **Siblings**

**No children should be left in the car unattended for any reason or any length of time.** If a staff member witnesses this, CPS will be called. This is a very dangerous situation to place children, and it is a huge liability issue for the school. Teachers will inform the Director or the Assistant Director and CPS will be notified.

## **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

In compliance with state regulations, Gethsemane Preschool requires each employee to complete online training that is offered by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Teachers must present the Director with a certificate of completion each year. The year is from hire date to hire date, not calendar or school year.

Parents and employees should be observant of common signs of child abuse or neglect including child's demeanor, behavior, speech, appearance, unusual injuries, and emotional reactions. Any sudden change should be carefully monitored to determine if neglect or abuse is suspected. Parents and teachers are required by law to report all suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective services using the Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-252-540 or [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child\\_protection/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_protection/)

If abuse is reported, in the interest of the child, Gethsemane Pre-School will fully cooperate and supply all necessary information to the appropriate organizations including Child Protective Services, police, and any counseling organization that has been contacted on behalf of the child. This cooperation will be based on the appropriate authorization by parents or organizations.

Assistance with parenting issues or any other difficult personal situation is available and confidential, please contact the Director. The support of families and care for our children is a priority at Gethsemane Preschool, and a responsibility shared by all.

## **Emergency Drills**

Gethsemane follows local city ordinances concerning emergency drills and evacuation procedures. Fire, tornado, disaster, and lock-down drills are conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.

In the event of an emergency, the teacher's first responsibility will be to lead class to safety. Teachers will carry their sign in/out clipboard, tablet along with their red emergency folder and first aid kit which is in their red emergency bag.

**Classrooms 1 through 5** will walk or be taken by teachers in either a wagon or evacuation crib to the far end of the Preschool parking lot.

**Classrooms 6, 7, and 8** will go to the church parking lot.

Once everyone is out of harm's way, the teacher will count the children in their class and call role to ensure that the entire class is present.

Then the Director will be notified that they are safe via walkie-talkie or text message.

The Director and/or the assistant director will make a sweep of the buildings. Parents will be contacted as needed.

The above mentioned emergency preparedness plan has also been included in our overall emergency preparedness folder and each classroom's red emergency folder.

In the event that we need to evacuate the property and go to a different location, we will go to Candlelight Church of Christ at 4215 Watonga Blvd, Houston TX 77092. Parents will be notified by the teacher or director to coordinate early pick up.

## **Parental Role**

You are the most important people in your child's life. Your support and encouragement of school and church activities are vital to develop good attitudes in your children.

Parents are welcome to reach out via Brightwheel to the teachers or administration at anytime with concerns. From time to time we will have events on campus and we would love to have parent involvement. When these events happen we will invite parents through Brightwheel.

Children will bring work completed at school home. Find an "important" place for your child to display projects. Your children have worked hard during the week and are proud of their accomplishments.

From time to time, the teacher may need special help on some projects. One way you can be of assistance is with special events. Donations of household items may also be requested.

We are fortunate to have so many caring and supportive parents at Gethsemane Preschool. We appreciate the many ways you will help make your child's year a success.

## **Financial Responsibilities**

### **Policies Regarding Financial Responsibility**

***"The master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them."***

***Matthew 25:19***

It is understood that, while Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool is in ministry to children and their families, operating expenses must be met. Gethsemane expects parents to partner with the school in achieving the mission and goals of the school, it is therefore expected that families will treat their financial obligations to the school seriously. Families who fall behind in their financial obligations are asked to contact the Director as soon as a problem arises. Parents are urged to work in a partnership of mutual respect and understanding with the school administration to ensure that their financial obligations are met in a timely manner.

### **Payments**

Payments can be made via cash, check, credit card, or bank draft through the Brightwheel app. There will be 3% admin charge added when a credit card is used and a \$0.60 charge for each bank draft.

### **Overdue Accounts**

Payments are due the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and considered late after the 15th. At this time, a \$20 late fee will be assessed by the Director on all overdue balances.

Failure to resolve overdue accounts may result in:

1. Denial of registration for the coming year;
2. Removal from the program
3. Full legal and credit remedies including, but not limited to, transfer of accounts to attorneys or collection agencies.

### **Returned Checks**

A charge of \$40 will be assessed on returned payments. Returned checks are not re-deposited.

# Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool

## Parent Agreement

- I acknowledge that I have received the 2024-2025 edition of the Gethsemane Lutheran Preschool Handbook, which includes the Discipline and Guidance Policies, and I agree to read and adhere to all policies stated within.
- I understand that if my child shows signs of illness including fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, cough or respiratory illness, pink eye or any other potentially contagious illness my child will not be allowed to attend the program. I will keep him/her home until they are symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours without medication. I understand this means my child cannot return to the program the following day.
- I understand that I am responsible for my child until I place them in the care of the teacher. I will keep siblings under my supervision at all times. I will not leave my child unattended in a vehicle for any reason or length of time.
- I understand that all food sent from home should be ready to eat. Gethsemane is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child’s daily food needs. Foods that pose a choking hazard must be cut to the appropriate size to prevent choking.
- I understand that if any of my personal information should change, such as work phone number or home address, I will provide the school with updated information.
- I understand that Gethsemane’s hours of operation are 8:00am-3:00pm. If I arrive prior to 8:00 I should wait at car line. Teachers may be on campus; however, they are not responsible for children prior to 8:00. If I am late picking up my child, late pick-up fees will be applied to my account. I also understand that chronic after-hours lateness may result in my child being dropped from the extended care program.

Child’s Full Name (printed)\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_