Lambs of Grace Preschool

Parent Handbook

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Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me." Mark 10:14

Dear Lambs of Grace Preschool Families,

Welcome to Lambs of Grace Preschool. We are honored that you have chosen our program for your child's preschool enrichment. We look forward to providing a year filled with exciting and rewarding experiences to all our preschool friends. We hope the information provided in this handbook will help you to gain an understanding and appreciation for your child's preschool involvement.

One of the primary objectives of Lambs of Grace Preschool is to provide a readiness foundation for your child's education and to make each child's first experience with school a successful and happy one. As early childhood educators, we know that a positive self-image is the foremost ingredient to a child's success. It is an honor to partner with each family to make this a priority for each child.

At the beginning of every school year, the staff at Lambs of Grace are reminded of a wise thought once heard, "Knowledge enters the mind gradually, almost unconsciously. It is the teacher's job to plant it like a seed, tend to it with encouragement and love, and nurture it while it grows and blooms." We believe, here at Lambs of Grace, that we provide such an atmosphere for all our students to grow and bloom.

May God richly bless your family and your time at Lambs of Grace,

The Staff of Lambs of Grace Preschool

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Mission Statement

Lambs of Grace Preschool provides a nurturing environment of trust built on God's holy word and daily creates developmentally appropriate opportunities for preschoolers in the local community to grow intellectually, socially, physically, and spiritually.

Philosophy Statement

Lambs of Grace Preschool provides a family atmosphere where each child learns that he/she is a unique and precious individual: a special person for whom Jesus lived, died, and rose again.

It is our purpose to support your child's spiritual, social, intellectual, emotional, and physical growth in a child-centered environment of warmth, friendliness, and genuine love. We believe that every child should be treated with respect and provided with a safe and secure nurturing environment where children are free to explore independently with guidance from their teachers.

Curriculum Statement

- The children will receive preschool instruction in alphabet and number recognition, reading readiness, math, science, language, music, art, and socialization skills. In addition, children will develop fine muscle skills while exploring and experimenting with different mediums, such as painting, drawing, writing, tracing, coloring, cutting, completing puzzles, and multiple other age-appropriate activities.

- The main focus of learning is through play. Children make their own choices throughout the day which develops independence, self-discipline, and self-esteem.

- We use a gospel-centered curriculum developed from *My First Bible Storybook* published by Concordia Publishing House. Through chronologically teaching stories from the Bible, children learn about God's people, promises, and the Good News of salvation for everyone given to us through Jesus Christ. Bible stories, prayers, songs, and attending an age appropriate chapel service are part of the weekly curriculum. Our curriculum promotes a child's social and emotional development by focusing on how Jesus teaches us to relate and act towards our parents, fellow students, and the world around us.

Enrollment Procedure

1. All students must register for admission every year. Enrollment for currently enrolled families will start February 1st for the next school year. (Registration is open first to current students re-enrolling for the next school year, current students' siblings, the children enrolled in the Mother's Morning Out Program, and members of Grace Lutheran Church.) Open enrollment for the community will start March 1st for the next school year. Enrollment of a child is based on a first come, first served basis until classes are full. A waiting list will be started once classes are full.

2. Parents and/or children are not required to be members of Grace Lutheran Church or attend services to enroll. However, if you would like learn more about Grace Lutheran Church, we would be happy to provide you with information.

3. The yearly registration and supply fee of $100 must accompany the student's registration paperwork.

4. State licensing requires that a copy of up-to-date immunization records **must** be provided at the time of registration and kept in each child's school record folder. Please check with your child's doctor to ensure that your child is up-to-date. Any additional immunizations received during the school year should be reported to the director with a copy for your child's school record folder.

5. Our program accepts students between the ages of three and five years of age. **Our State license requires that all enrolled children must be toilet trained.** At the beginning of the school year, please bring to school a complete change of clothing (for summer and winter) in a zip-lock bag and labeled with your child's name. The change of clothes will be returned at the end of the school year.

6. There is no reduction in tuition for absent or missed days.

Child Guidance and Discipline

Lambs of Grace Preschool believes it is important to set limits and to be firm and consistent. Classroom rules will be discussed on a daily basis. Children will participate in creating these classroom rules and they will be involved in reinforcing the rules in their classroom. Discipline should not be designed to control children, but to help children control themselves. This type of self-discipline and self-control enables the children to make choices and accept responsibility for their choices. Our preschool staff will adhere to all disciplinary requirements imposed by the State licensing authority.

The discipline methods used at Lambs of Grace Preschool are as follows: early intervention, redirection, removing the child from the problem area, or asking a child to sit with the teacher and take a moment to relax. We do not use any type of physical punishment. If a child is disrupting the class, the child will sit with an adult until they can regain control of their behavior. Parents will be notified when continual disruptive behavior occurs. Ongoing efforts will be made to work with the parents and the children. However, if unacceptable behavior persists and continually disrupts the class, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child. If a child inflicts harm on other children and/or staff members, verbally and/or physically, the parents will be asked to withdraw the child. **The safety of the children in our care is our number one priority.** If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact the director.

Disenrollment

Lambs of Grace Preschool exercises the right to disenroll a child for the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments or fees.
- Not observing the rules as outlined in the parent handbook (See Child Guidance and Discipline Policy)
- Child has special needs which the school cannot adequately meet.

Hours of Operation

Lambs of Grace Preschool operates Monday-Friday from 9:00am to noon. The preschool doors are locked at 9:15am and unlocked at 11:55am. If you need access to the classroom before noon, please ring the doorbell. The bell sounds in the preschool hallway.

Calendar

The school year begins in August and ends in May. We follow the Albuquerque Public School District Calendar. However, our first day of school is always one week later than APS so that parents can have older children settled in school before starting their preschooler in school. A copy of our calendar is included in the enrollment packet for posting in your home for convenience.

Withdrawal

If possible, a one month notice should be given to the Director if parents withdraw their child. Tuition must be paid for the one-month period and all outstanding fees must be paid.

Late Pick Up

Children enrolled at Lambs of Grace Preschool should be picked up at noon. Because it is often distressing for a young child to be left when all the other children are gone, late pick-ups should be considered an unusual occurrence. We do, however, understand that special circumstances arise. If, in the case of an emergency, you cannot pick up your child on time or send one of your emergency contacts or authorized pick-up contacts, please notify us immediately. **In the absence of contact from parent/guardian after 30 minutes of closing, we will begin calling all the numbers listed on the authorized release form**; please make sure your contact phone numbers are current. **The Bernalillio Sheriff's Department will be called if we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact after *two hours*.** Late fees will be charged when applicable.

Tuition Payments

Tuition is due by the first of the month. Payment in full is expected each month. A late fee of $15.00 will be charged to accounts not paid by the 15th of each month. Payments can be made in the form of a check, money order, or cashier's check or cash. Checks should be made payable to "Lambs of Grace Preschool."

Unpaid Tuition

If you wish to keep a place in class for your child, you must be responsible for all monthly tuition payments. Tuition is due at the beginning of the month. Failure to make a monthly payment will be cause for removal of the child from the class. Re-admittance to class can occur only if a space is available and all debts and current tuition payments have been paid.

Notification of Absence

Please call the school (#823-9100) and leave a message if your child will be absent, so that we are not concerned; or email a message to logdirector@gracelutheran-nm.org Please notify the school if your child has a communicable disease such as chicken pox or strep throat, so other parents may be notified. The school has the right to request a doctor's note in order for a child to be admitted back into the classroom.

Ratios/Class Size

Lambs of Grace Preschool currently follows a ratio of 1 adult to 8 children, which is much lower than the state licensing allowance of 1 adult to 14 children. We intentionally keep our adult to child ratio low so we may provide a high quality academic and developmentally appropriate environment for young children.

Security

- Lambs of Grace Preschool provides parents with numerous security measures. When a person other than the parents' designated pick-up person attempts to pick up a child, the director or teacher will consult the child's personal information sheet. The person's ID will be checked if the parent has given that person permission to pick-up their child. If not, the parent will be called. Please notify the Lambs of Grace staff if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child.
- Lambs of Grace Preschool practices fire drills monthly and also has an emergency evacuation plan and a Lock Down Drill and Procedure in place. If you would like to review the policy and procedure please contact the director.

Meal Service

Lambs of Grace Preschool does not provide meal service to the children. Children are required to bring their own lunches to school. Please send your child to school with a healthy and nutritious lunch. Please, no soft drinks.

Tree Nut Free Policy

Lambs of Grace Preschool has created a peanut/tree nut restricted policy. The goal of this policy is to create an environment that will reduce the risks to children with life threatening peanut/tree nut allergies. Lambs of Grace will not serve any food items that contain peanut or tree nut ingredients or food items made on equipment that produces these products. Parents should bring only peanut/tree nut free store packaged products when supplying birthday treats and food items included in their child's lunches. Care should always be taken to read the food label to make sure that items do not contain peanut or nut ingredients or are manufactured on equipment which produces these products.

Field Trips

Due to State requirements and guidelines regarding student transportation, Lambs of Grace Preschool does not take group field trips outside the classroom. However, we may take a field trip where each parent transports and stays with their child during the field trip. We also often invite guest speakers to the preschool class.

Weather Closure

When the administration for Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) announces a 2 hour delay, Lambs of Grace Preschool will be closed. If APS announces a school closure, Lambs of Grace Preschool will also be closed. Information on school closures can be obtained from KOAT channel 7.

Emergency Drills

Fire drills, Tornado drills, Emergency Evacuation drills, and Lockdown drills are conducted on a monthly or quarterly basis as mandated by State Licensing.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation from the classroom, the children and the teachers will calmly exit the classroom through the back door of the classroom. The teachers will take the class attendance sheet, a cell phone, the first aid kit, and information sheets for each student. The students and teachers will gather at the southwest corner of the parking lot away from the building. At that time, we will wait for further information from emergency officials. Parents will be called to pick up their child if we cannot re-enter the building.

Missing Child Procedure

In the unlikely event that a child is missing from the classroom, all Lambs of Grace Preschool staff are instructed in the school's Missing Child Procedure. The Missing Child Procedure is posted in the classroom and is addressed as part of the orientation process for all staff.

Universal Precautions Acknowledgement

Lambs of Grace Preschool promotes and requires the use of Universal Precautions for the protection of our staff and children against the spread of blood borne pathogens.

Universal Precautions is the preventative process of self-protection by treating all visible blood and body fluids as if they were contaminated. The process for handling visible blood or body fluids is as follows:

1. Hands and arms must always be washed after contact with blood or body fluid (even when gloves are used).
2. Latex gloves are to be worn if a person anticipates any possible contact with blood or body fluids.
3. If needed, safety goggles are to be used to prevent blood from contacting eyes.

Health Policies

1. **Do not** bring your child to Lambs of Grace Preschool if they are ill. This helps your child regain their health and prevents the spread of illness to the other children and staff members. The following are signs of possible illness and indicate that your child **should not** come to school:

- a fever of 100 degrees or higher
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- severe cough and/or sore throat
- unexplained skin rash
- evidence of lice
- conjunctivitis (Pink eye)
- runny nose with yellow or green mucus

2. A staff member will call if your child exhibits any of these symptoms while at school. You will need to make arrangements for your child to be picked up

as soon as possible. If we cannot get in contact with a parent, the emergency contact person will be called. **A child should not return to class for 24 hours after the symptoms are gone or until the child's doctor releases the child.**

3. If your child needs to take a prescription medication while at school, please ask the Director for a medication form. After completing the form, please provide it to the Director to be stored with the prescription medication in a locked area. Any prescription medication must be labeled as prescribed for the child and labeled with the prescribed dosage and, if needed, how to administer the medication. Over the counter medication must be in its original box.

4. If your child has severe allergies, please request an ACTION PLAN from the doctor and or allergist and provide a copy to the school along with medication to be administered, if needed. If a severe allergic reaction occurs, parents and 911 will be notified immediately.

5. All preschools are required by law to submit information regarding any infectious diseases within 24 hours to the New Mexico Health Department. A list of those diseases and conditions is posted in the school hallway.

Minor Accidents

When your child has a minor injury, a staff member will provide appropriate first aid and the parent will be notified with an Accident Report, a telephone call, or in person. Current First Aid and CPR certification is required by all staff members. Please realize that when there is a group of children together, minor accidents are likely to occur.

Clothing

Children's clothing should be comfortable. **They should wear closed-toed and rubber-soled shoes**, even in the warm weather, so that they can run, dance, climb, and play both inside and outside. Please no flip-flops. Make sure that your child wears clothing appropriate for the weather. **Mark your child's name on the label of coats and sweaters to prevent loss.** Lambs of Grace Preschool has a no hat policy while inside the building. Children may bring hats to be worn while outside only.

Outside Time

Your child will have 30 minutes of daily outdoor play during the preschool class time, weather permitting. Exercise, fresh air, and play will be part of your child's daily routine. Please dress your child appropriately for outside play each day. Closed toed shoes make playtime much more enjoyable on our playground. **Note**: If parents choose to have their child protected with sunscreen, they are responsible for applying the sunscreen to their child prior to arriving at school.

Sample Daily Schedule

9:00 – 9:30	Arrival & Greetings (Self-Selection)
9:30 – 9:40	Clean-up and Circle Time Activities (story, calendar, weekly theme)
9:40 – 10:00	Tables: Art Activity, Fine Motor Skills, Math and Reading Readiness Concepts
10:00 - 10:30	Self-Selection and Clean-up
10:30 – 10:40	Music
10:40 – 10:50	Show and Tell
10:50 – 11:00	Bible Story/Chapel
11:00 – 11:30	Large Motor Skills, Outdoor Play
11:30 – 11:35	Personal Care, Transition to Lunch
11:35 – 12:00	Lunch, Prepare for Dismissal

**Please note that the daily schedule may change due to weather, children's needs or staff changes.

Parent Involvement

Classroom Communication

The teachers will post a daily schedule and weekly lesson plans on a bulletin board just outside their classroom. Emailed and/or hard copy newsletters are sent/handed out each month. Please take the time to read the letters and notes to stay informed. Remove items from your child's cubby each day your child attends class. Please let your child's teacher know of any problems or situations that your child is having. All communication between the director, teacher and parent is confidential.

Helping Hands

This is an organizational calendar designed to assist with different school events throughout the year, for example, helping with the Christmas party, hiding Easter eggs, etc. A list with dates and times will be available at the beginning of the year and parents will be asked to sign up to assist with an event. There are no meetings to attend. Parent/Teacher communication is very essential in making your child's education a success.

Volunteering

There are many ways for parents to help at Lambs of Grace Preschool. Some ideas include: sign up to help with a classroom event, work with individual children, and assist the teachers with various projects. Please let us know if you have any special talents that you would like to share with the children.

Family Events

At least twice during the school year, Lambs of Grace Preschool will schedule special family events.

Birthdays

For your child's birthday, you are welcome to bring a treat to share with the children as long as it is store-bought or commercially prepared in order to meet State guidelines. Please be cautious to not provide items containing peanuts or peanut products or items manufactured in a facility that processes other foods that contain nuts.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences will be held twice during the school year. Your child's academic and social progress will be assessed prior to the conference and a progress report will be presented and explained to parents during the child's scheduled parent/teacher conference. The conferences provide an intentional opportunity for the parents to speak with the teacher about their child's progress and any possible concerns. Of course, parents can speak to their child's teacher at any time throughout the year. We have an open door policy at Lambs of Grace Preschool. Parents and guardians are always welcome in the classroom.

Non-discrimination Policy

Lambs of Grace Preschool admits children of any race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status, to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We also do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The staff of Lambs of Grace Preschool are mandatory reporters. We are required by the State to report suspected child abuse or neglect. We must and will contact the Child Abuse and Neglect Social Services Division of New Mexico Child Youth and Families if we suspect abuse or neglect of any child.

Confidentiality

All information regarding the children and their families is confidential. The staff members will not discuss information about individual children with other parents. All meetings between the parents and the director and the teaching staff remain confidential. We do not release or discuss specific information with others unless it is necessary to serve the customer or the law requires it.

Preschool Contact Information

Address: 7550 Eubank Ave NE
Albuquerque, NM 87122

Telephone: 505-823-9100

Email: logdirector@gracelutheran-nm.org