

# PARENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023



*A ministry of Northridge Community Church*

5100 Dickerson Road

Charlottesville, Virginia 22911

(434) 964-1560 (Preschool)

(434) 964-1500 (Church)

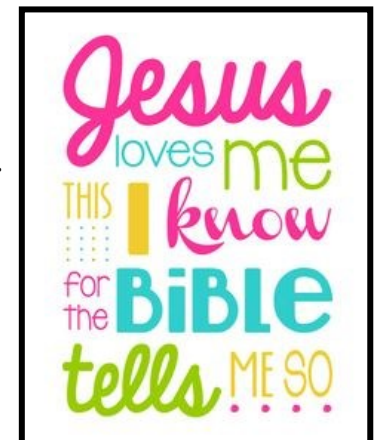
Email: [Preschool@visitnorthridge.org](mailto:Preschool@visitnorthridge.org)

Website: [visitnorthridge.org](http://visitnorthridge.org)

Debbie Swanson, Director

Donna Rowland, Assistant Director

(Revised 9/27/22)



## **PHILOSOPHY:**

Northridge Preschool is a Christian Preschool that is dedicated to achieving a positive learning experience in an atmosphere of Godly love and understanding. We believe strongly that each child placed in our care is a unique gift from God and that we are all created in His image.

## **ORGANIZATION:**

Northridge Preschool is a non-profit ministry amenable to the official body of the Northridge Community Church of the Nazarene. A Director gives overall immediate supervision to qualified teachers, caregivers and staff. The school is set up to meet all state and local requirements. The equipment and facilities of the school conform to all applicable safety and sanitary standards established by the Albemarle County Public Health Department and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS:**

As required by state law, all staff members are certified annually by a practicing physician to be free from any disabilities which would prevent them from properly caring for the children. All staff is also CPR and First Aid trained and certified.

## **PROGRAM:**

Our curriculum is centered on a "Letter-of-the-Week" program that is phonetically based. We also utilize a Christ-centered approach to learning.

Preschool Introduction Class (Age 3): This class encompasses fun and learning activities through free play, circle time, letters and numbers, creative play, art, music, science, and Bible stories. A foundation of positive social skills are reinforced by our staff and learned by the children as they may proceed to the Pre-Kindergarten 4-Year-Old level.

Pre-Kindergarten Class (Age 4): Primarily the same basic concepts are taught as in the 3-year-old program, however, with a greater emphasis and preparation for Kindergarten eligibility.

As stated in our philosophy, Northridge is strongly committed to the spiritual development of children in our school. We seek to provide each child with a basic understanding of the Christian faith through Bible stories, songs, games, and activities. The children and staff gather together to participate in singing and worship experiences geared specifically for the young child.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

17. **VIRGINIA STATE LICENSING STATUS:** In compliance with the code of Virginia, this center is exempt from licensure and is classified as a “religious exempt” child day care center. We are, however, inspected regularly by the local Health and Fire Departments to maintain standards.
  18. **ENROLLMENT/RATIO:** We limit our enrollment for preschool to 10 pupils per day per teacher.
  19. **ACTIVITY FEE:** As many of you know and others will find out, we here at Northridge try to do all we do with excellence. We plan each visitor and field trip with great care and make our plans by what we feel will be the best learning experience for your child. We have put together the entire cost of field trips, visitor’s in, special lunches, a 5x7 class picture, and “cap & gowns” for our graduating 4’s in the spring. All these things and more will be included into an “Activity Fee” for the entire school year. This can be done in (2) payments. One half of the payment is due in September and the other half due in February. **THESE FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE!!**
  20. **PARKING LOT SAFETY:** Due to the large number of families arriving and departing the same time each day, parking lot safety is a primary concern. Please be aware of your children, as well as those around you, at all times when you are in the parking area. While we encourage our preschool families to talk and build friendships and relationships with one another, the parking lot or sidewalk area is not a safe place to do so. The front area of the building becomes congested at these busy times. It is our responsibility to maintain, as much as we can control, the safety of everyone while on school grounds. Due to fire, health, and safety concerns we need to keep the front of the entire building as clear as possible at all times.
  21. **CHURCH BUILDING AND PROPERTY:** We operate within the Northridge Community Church facility. They work very hard to provide for us a beautiful and inviting building and grounds area. Our school appreciates their hard work and want to show that by respecting the facility. Please be aware of where your children are at all times. There are areas of the church that are not “children friendly” (the stage and sound rooms, etc.) and the children’s safety and well being are our primary concern.
1. To help the child integrate and become an accepted member of their group; to understand and work well with their own level of development.
  2. To provide activities which will engage and satisfy curiosity; to stimulate thinking, planning, reasoning, experimenting, making decisions and evaluating results; to develop problem solving skills; and to widen and deepen interests and appreciations.
  3. To develop interest and skill in the use of equipment and materials that is suitable for and satisfying to each child.
  4. To help each child express himself effectively and appropriately.
  5. To provide activities that will develop age appropriate gross/fine motor skills.
  6. To acquaint the child with basic Christian concepts and familiar Bible stories and songs. It is not the intent of the teachers to impose doctrinal beliefs, but rather to present a concept of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit on a child's level of understanding, specifically as our loving Father, Savior and Friend.

## **GUIDELINES:**

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Children must be 3 or 4, respectively, by October 1st and must be fully toilet trained (independently toileting, including adequately wiping) to attend Northridge Preschool. Admission to the preschool shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, or sex.
2. **ATTENDANCE & PROMPTNESS:** This year we would like to drop-off under the front porch. You may either park in the handicap spots for a few minutes or the parking lot and walk them up OR pull along the sidewalk and let them out when you come to the porch, Pick up will work the same in reverse.
3. **CHILD RELEASE POLICY:** **We cannot release any child to anyone other than the parents without specific authorization to do so.** Enrollment forms allow parents to indicate such permission. A picture ID is required and must be presented to someone in the office and/or to the teacher. Please also write a note to your teacher ahead of time when you know someone else is going to pick up your child. State the date, name of the adult, and the approximate time of pick-up. Any situation involving custody arrangements requires written legal documentation that must be given to the Director.

1. **CLOTHING:** Please dress your child to suit the weather. Pay particular attention to the local weather forecasts and dress your child accordingly. Outdoor play, if 32 degrees or above, is scheduled every day (except for inclement weather). Please label ALL clothing. Children may wear clothing of your preferences; however, choose clothes that are easy for your child to manage when using the bathroom. Keep in mind we use craft items daily such as glue, paint, glitter, etc. “Flip-flops” fall off easily and can cause a child to slip when running/climbing. No dress-up clothes or pajamas should be worn as clothing.
2. **WHAT TO BRING:** Children need a change of clothing in case of “accidents”. A change of clothing should be kept at the school for this purpose. These need to be updated according to the change in the seasons. Children will also need to bring a lunch in a lunch box clearly labeled with his/her name, (2) “finger-food” type snacks in a separate snack baggie, backpacks and water bottles are encouraged.
6. **HOLIDAYS:** We will observe Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter Break, Good Friday/and sometimes Easter Monday.
7. **PERSONAL BELONGINGS:** Please do not allow your child to bring to school toys or anything of special value. We will not be responsible for any items that are lost or damaged. Please do not allow your child to bring play guns, knives, or other toys associated with violence; not even for Show-N-Tell.
8. **HEALTH AND SAFETY:** A health certificate from your doctor must be submitted for each child. Please inform the school in writing if your child has any health problems. This information will be kept on file. We also need to view a birth certificate due to 1998 Virginia Legislation. Allergy lists will be in the classrooms. It is up to parents to disclose this vital information as soon as possible to the preschool office as well as to each teacher.

A memo to parents will be distributed if there is a possibility your child has been exposed to a contagious disease or problem that we've been told about. For instance, we would notify the parents if a child had any communicable disease such as, but not limited to, Covid, pink eye, chicken pox, strep throat, head lice, rashes (ringworm, impetigo), thrush, etc. Parents, please notify the office immediately when your child has been diagnosed with a condition such as these so we may inform parents. This will be handled very discretely.

16. **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS:** Northridge Preschool recognizes that parents search long and hard to find the best possible school for their children. Once enrollment decisions have been made, the next step is for the preschool to ensure you that your child is lovingly cared for and thriving through the educational opportunities offered here. The administrative and teaching staff will do their best to keep you informed and to answer any questions that you may have about our program. One of the best ways parents can help is to read this handbook and follow all the policies and procedures. We welcome suggestions for improvement in any area of our program. The Director will consider all recommendations and forward them to the Preschool Board for consideration.

**\*\*\*Promptly read every communication you receive from the school. Check your child's backpack and folders daily for notices.**

Monthly you should receive a class newsletter. Periodically you will also receive a School Newsletter which will contain information pertinent to the entire school as well as excerpts from individual classes. Included, but not limited to, are current events, policy changes, calendars, additions, classroom activities, and updates. Please read it promptly and carefully! Letters, memos, receipts, etc. will be placed in your child's folder.

**Communications to and from the staff:** All emails should go thru the school office to [Preschool@visitnorthridge.org](mailto:Preschool@visitnorthridge.org). These will be printed and placed in the appropriate teacher's mailbox. Unless you already have a pre-existing relationship with a staff member, please do not contact our staff via social networking sites. The privacy of our staff as well as the children placed in our care are our priority. We would not want any information divulged on such networks.



15. **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:** In case of discipline needed for your child we try to use these steps:
- a. Re-communication: We always try to talk and redirect your child through the problem and try to solve it this way.
  - b. Take-A-Break: When talking does not solve the problem we will use take-a-break. This gives the child time to think about the situation and resolve it. We do believe in forgiveness and always stress this with the child. Usually the problem is resolved here at Northridge and need not be addressed at home.
  - c. Director's Office: When other options have not worked, we will ask the child to come to the office, where they will be addressed by the Director. In rare instances, we may need to contact you.

We believe children learn positive behavior through education and redirection. The most effective way to build a child's repertoire of positive behavior is to reward those behaviors so that the child will want to repeat them. The concept is simple -- we focus our attention on teaching children what they should do or what positive options to choose rather than what they should not do.

At times, children behave inappropriately. Some of their behaviors may even be injurious to themselves or others. We feel that for the safety of all the children, these behaviors must be controlled.

We never use physical discipline and will not use it even at a parent's request. Parents are to refrain from corporal punishment and demeaning language while on Northridge's property.

Positive behavior is encouraged by organizing our day to give children ample time for stimulating activities, quiet time, outdoor play, and a rest period.

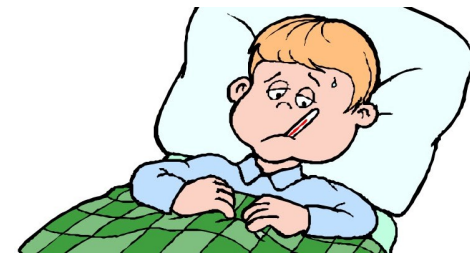


We ask that all parents maintain safety at all times in the parking lot area. Please do not leave your child(ren) unattended in our busy parking lot. Your child will not be released to older siblings without prior permission from the Director. If anyone other than yourself is to pick up your child, you must give us written permission stating who is authorized to do so. The person picking up your child will be required to provide a picture identification before the child will be released. Also if your child needs medication, you must give us written permission to administer the medication. If a child shows signs of sickness (100 degree fever, throwing-up, diarrhea, etc.) the parent will be notified and must make arrangements to pick-up the child immediately.

**\*\*\*Children must be fever-free, diarrhea-free and/or not have thrown-up for a 24 hour time period before returning to school without being medicated.**

**Biting:** We recognize that some children will bite others when frustrated, to reduce a conflict, or to gain a sense of power. Strategies used by our staff including caring for the victim immediately, and removing and/or redirecting the biter. In the case of persistent biting, a conference will be held with the parents to determine an appropriate strategy. In extreme cases, immediate withdrawal may be necessary.

**Child Abuse:** The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that all personnel of schools report any suspicion of child abuse. Northridge Preschool, therefore, is obligated to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.



9. **EMERGENCIES:**

**Drills:** To ensure safety of all the children and staff, monthly Fire Drills are held throughout the school year. Special visitors (the Fire Department) will also be invited to come and speak about Fire Safety. Lock down and other weather related drills may be practiced as needed.

**Emergency Involving the Child:** In case of serious accident or sudden illness, the following procedures are used:

- Child's parents (and 911 if necessary) are called.
- The child and his/her health records are taken by emergency services to the closest hospital. A staff member will accompany and remain with the child until the parent's arrival.
- In all cases, an emergency report is completed and placed in the child's school file.

**\*\*\*It is very important that your work numbers and emergency contact information be kept current. Report all changes, including address, telephone numbers, physician and health insurance information to the office immediately.**

**Insurance:** The school carries liability insurance to cover costs not covered by your personal insurance during school hours.

10. **DAYS MISSED:** There will be no reduction in fees due to snow, holidays, teacher workdays, etc. Your child's tuition has been broken down monthly. Days missed cannot be made up later, nor can days be changed around. We will reschedule any school party or event that is missed due to inclement weather.

11. **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:**

We will, in most cases, abide by the Albemarle County School policy. If Albemarle County schools are closed due to weather, so are we. If they are on a 2 hour delay, we will be closed. We will post on our Preschool Facebook Page and an email will be sent to each family.

**Emergency School Closing:** Again, we will operate on the Albemarle County Public School inclement weather decision. All school closings will be announced as soon as possible on local television stations, our Northridge Preschool Facebook Page, and an email.

12. **SCHEDULE:**

Early Care	-	7:30 am—9:00 am
Preschool	-	9:00 am—12:30 pm
Extended Day	-	12:30 pm—4:30 pm

Habitual lateness may result in a meeting with the Administration, and/or expulsion from the school.



13. **PARENT CONFERENCES:** Parents may occur when needed, but must be pre-arranged. We distribute progress reports in May of each year.

14. **TUITION AND FEES:** All tuitions and fees are listed on the Financial Expectations worksheet.

**Registration Fee:** A non-refundable \$100.00 registration fee must be paid for each child upon initial enrollment. If you pre-register for the following year the fee will be lowered to \$75.00.

**Late Fees and Bank Fees:** A fee of \$2.00 per day will be charged for late tuition payment. We regret that a delinquency of payment by two weeks could disqualify your child from attending Northridge Preschool. Any checks returned to Northridge Preschool must be replaced by either cash or a certified check. There is a returned check fee of \$25.00.

**Early Withdrawal:** Should you decide to withdraw your child for any reason from the school, you MUST notify the Director at least 2 weeks in advance. You will be expected to pay for those two weeks even if you chose to withdraw your child before they are completed.