

2026-2027 PARENT HANDBOOK GRACE CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL



GRACE CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL
Grace United Methodist Church
717-566-8260
gracechristianearlylearning.org

WELCOME TO GRACE CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL!

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Thank you for enrolling your child this school year in Grace Christian Preschool at Grace United Methodist Church. Our preschool was established in 2009 to provide a nurturing, Christian-based learning environment while meeting the early education needs of children.

To meet the goals of our school, we employ educated, energetic, morally responsible staff who have high standards and are dedicated to providing your child with age-appropriate educational and spiritual lessons and activities, helping them to be socially and developmentally prepared when they enter elementary school.

Maintaining the safest possible environment for our preschoolers is a priority at Grace Christian Preschool. A security system was implemented and installed in 2012 at our school, which requires a key fob in order to enter our upstairs hallway, as well as the elevator, on weekdays during preschool hours. To further protect our students and staff, a *Nightlock* Door Barricade device was installed on each classroom door in 2019 as a means to immediately secure our classrooms from the inside during an emergency situation. The safety and security of your child is of utmost concern and importance to us.

Please contact me whenever you have any questions or concerns about the Preschool, our curriculum, our teachers, or your child. We at Grace Christian Preschool look forward to getting to know your child and your family. We hope to make your child's early education experience a positive one.

Sincerely,

Heidi H. Hoover
Director
Grace Christian Preschool
717-566-8260

Goals

We provide a positive Christian environment in which children can learn and play, while we strive to equip preschoolers with the essential academic skills that are necessary for Kindergarten. We also concentrate on helping our students develop the social skills for a successful elementary school experience. During our class sessions, we emphasize cooperation, listening, following directions, and attention to tasks. Each class is designed to combine activities that are planned and structured, with opportunities for children to freely choose activities that they enjoy, all within an atmosphere that is safe, nurturing, and fun. Children will be developing a greater sense of independence and self-confidence, which will prepare them for Kindergarten.

Grace Christian Preschool Board of Directors

The governing body of Grace Christian Preschool is the Preschool Board of Directors, which makes all decisions concerning the Preschool. The Board consists of staff, administrators, and parent representatives.

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy As to Students

Grace Christian Preschool admits students of any race, color, and national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.

Registration

A non-refundable fee of \$50.00 is charged at the time of registration, which is *not* applicable to the first month's tuition.

Tuition and Payment Policy

Monthly tuition is due starting in September and continuing through May, using the **Lillio** online billing platform. Automatic monthly payments will begin in September, on the **10th** of each month, either charged to a credit card or drafted from a bank account.

Parents first need to register to set up an account through Lillio. A credit card number or bank account information must be provided, and parents will be asked to review and sign a Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) agreement, which enables autopay for tuition each month.

A \$20.00 fee will be charged for insufficient funds.

Preschool Families who enroll *more than one* child will receive a **10% discount** off of the total tuition cost.

Delinquent Accounts

Any family whose tuition balance is past due for an extended period is not guaranteed continued enrollment. The Preschool Director, Pastor, and Board of Directors reserve the right to use their discretion when determining withdrawal of a child due to a delinquent account. Every effort is made to develop a timeframe that allows families to pay off their outstanding balance in a reasonable amount of time.

Tuition Assistance

Through Grace Christian Preschool's *Christian Education Blessings Scholarship Fund*, tuition assistance is available for families experiencing financial hardship. Interested families should complete the Blessings Fund Scholarship Application form, which can be found on the preschool website: gracechristianearlylearning.org. The application should then be submitted to the director.

Playground Use

The outdoor playground areas of Grace Church are designated for *class use only* by enrolled students in Grace Christian Preschool and Grace Christian Child Care.

Parking Lot Procedures

The safety of you and your child is important to us, so *please drive slowly* and *walk carefully* in the parking lot. To keep traffic moving, please enter the church parking lot along the right side; park and enter along the *back entrance* near the "Glass Hallway." Please do not park in the "Loading Zone" spaces at the Gymnasium entrance, as these spots are needed by our kitchen staff for loading and unloading. Grace Church's parking lot is a busy place with school buses and delivery trucks, in addition to parents coming into the Preschool and Daycare. Please remember that school buses have the right of way; *always be watchful!*

Arrival and Dismissal Procedure and Expectations

Children will be dropped off at staggered class times at the entrance doors at the east end of the "Glass Hallway" of Grace. Families will enter at these doors at Entrance **#4** and walk down the hallway. Parents are expected to stay with their child in the hall and through the arrival process. There is a **5-minute window of time to arrive**. Afterwards, teachers will escort each class up to their classroom. Children *must be supervised* by parents or guardians for appropriate behavior at all times while on church property to avoid liability issues. Please do not allow children to engage in behavior that is not permitted during school hours, such as shouting, running down the hallway, or acting in any way that is disrespectful of others or of church or preschool property.

We know that some children may have some separation anxiety, especially at the start of the school year. After you say your goodbyes at the entrance table, please exit the building through the stairwell exit door. Please don't linger in the hallway before exiting, for this makes things harder for the children and more challenging for the teachers as they are trying to get everyone settled and up into the classroom.

Please respect teachers' time and be *on time* for drop off and pick up. *If you are later than half an hour to arrive* at Grace for the *start* of your child's class, there will *not* be a Preschool staff member available to come downstairs to allow you to enter the locked building. Therefore, we will see you the next class day.

It is important that your child is picked up *promptly* at the end of class. Children may only be released to their parents, guardians, and persons authorized on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form. Parents must verbally inform or write a note to the teacher when planning for someone other than those listed on the Emergency Contact Form to pick up their child. Children will be dismissed *one at a time* at the Playground Entrance **#5** door when a parent or authorized caregiver arrives. Please inform us if anyone else will be picking up your child, even if that person is on the designated list.

Late Pick-up Policy

If you are running late at pick up time for any reason, contact the Preschool director by a text message through *ClassDojo*, an email to heidihooover@gracehummelstown.org, or by calling the Preschool office at **717-566-8260** or the Church office at **717-566-2897**, so that the message can be relayed to your child's teachers and so that your child does not worry unnecessarily. For **consistent lateness** of *up to 10 minutes over the designated dismissal time* your child remains with us, **you will be assessed a \$10 late pick-up fee** at the time of pick up. Each additional 10 minutes will be charged \$10.

Inclement Weather Policy

If there is inclement weather that could impact the safety of our children, families, and staff, we may determine it is necessary to have a delayed start or to cancel classes for the day. When there is a delayed start, we will have the following modified class schedule:

***11:15AM-1:00PM** for all MORNING classes

***1:30PM-3:15PM** for all AFTERNOON classes

In the event that the Preschool must close early, parents will be contacted immediately. It is *critical* that we can reach parents by phone every day. Please let the teachers know how to contact you if you plan on being away from your phone. Emergency contact persons will be called if parents cannot be reached. Therefore, it is essential that all emergency information is kept up to date.

When Grace Christian Preschool is delayed or cancelled, you will receive a *text message* and an *e-mail message* from the director. Important weather-related announcements about Grace Christian Preschool also will be posted on *ABC Channel 27* at www.abc27.com (click WEATHER/SNOWWATCH).

IF several consecutive days of school are missed due to severe weather-related conditions, make-up days will be held in the spring.

BUILDING EVACUATION

In the event that we evacuate *the building*:

- *Children will be taken to the **Lower Dauphin Middle School** located directly behind Grace Church.
- *Parents will be notified of the situation through *ClassDojo* text messaging, email, and the local media.
- *If possible, parents will be called personally. Therefore, it is vital that you provide phone numbers where you can be reached, and keep your Emergency Contact numbers current.
- *Parents or others designated on the Emergency Contact sheets will pick children up at the **Lower Dauphin Middle School**.

COMMUNITY EVACUATION

In the event that *an evacuation of the Hershey/Hummelstown area* is designated by government officials:

- *Children will be taken to the **Northern Lebanon High School** in Lebanon.
- *Local media will be informed of the evacuation.
- *Parents will be notified through *ClassDojo* text messaging, and, if possible, notified personally by phone.
- *Parents or others designated on the Emergency Contact forms should pick up children at the preschool immediately; children may also be picked up at the **Northern Lebanon High School, 345 School Drive, Fredericksburg, PA 17026**.

Evacuation Route from
Grace Christian Preschool, 433 E. Main Street, Hummelstown, PA
TO
Northern Lebanon High School, 345 School Drive, Fredericksburg, PA
(22 miles/approximately 30 minutes)
Left onto Hersheypark Drive
Left onto State Highway 743 North/Laudermilch Road
Right onto US-22 East
Left onto Airport Road
Turn Right
Northern Lebanon High School is on the Left

Illness & Injury

If your child becomes ill during school hours, we will contact you immediately. If you are unavailable to pick up your child, we will call the emergency contact person(s) listed on your information form. Minor accidents are handled according to basic first aid procedures. If a *serious* accident occurs, we immediately call the parents and local paramedics, and apply emergency first aid.

You should keep your child *at home* if any of the following conditions occur:

1. Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. A child should have a temperature below 100.4 degrees for 24 hours *without use of fever-reducers*.
2. Headache, sore throat, or stomach ache accompanied by a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
3. Excessively runny nose with discolored discharge or persistent coughing
4. Strep throat – *Must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to class.*
5. Vomiting or Diarrhea – *Must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to class.*
6. Head Lice – *Must be treated before returning to class.*
7. Pink eye – *Must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to class.*
8. Rashes or open sores
9. COVID-19 or other communicable diseases

If a child is sent home sick during the school day for any reason (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) the child may ***not*** return to GCP *the next day*, regardless of what time they were sent home. A sick child must remain at home *at least* the entire next day, if not longer, until he or she is well. In general, ***if your child is sick, please keep him or her at home*** so that germs are not spread to classmates or staff!

Please notify the director if your child has an infectious disease such as COVID-19, pink eye, strep throat, or hand/foot/mouth disease so that parents of children in the class can be made aware and can be on the lookout for symptoms. In order to ensure the health and well-being of all our children, there are times when a doctor's note may be requested.

Tote Bags and Backpacks

Our **2's/3's** and **3's** preschoolers should bring their Grace Christian Preschool tote bag to class every day. This tote is used to carry school work and any correspondence home to you. Feel free to decorate your child's bag with fabric paint or other décor so it is more recognizable to him/her. *Your child's tote bag should be used in both the 2's/3's and 3's classes.* If your child's tote bag has been lost or misplaced, you may purchase a replacement for **\$10.00**. Please do not replace the bag with a backpack that has a zipper.

For our **4's** and **Pre-K 4's/5's** children, they may choose an elementary school-sized backpack of their own to use each day.

If your child's tote bag or backpack is left at home, a plastic bag will be provided to parents with papers and materials from that day.

Clothing

Children should come to preschool in play clothes. At school, your child will have the opportunity to glue and paint with their fingers; play with water; paint or use chalk at the easels; create with clay and play dough; and explore using many other potentially messy mediums. Children climb, jump, and play on the floor and at the playground. Please mark all outer clothing (i.e., jackets and sweatshirts) with your child's name.

For children in the **2's** class who wear diapers or pull-ups, please include extra diapers/pull-ups and wipes for daily use. For children in the **3's**, **4's**, and **Pre-K 4's/5's** classes, please include an extra pair of underwear. All children should have a spare seasonal outfit in a *labeled plastic bag* inside your child's tote bag or backpack, in case of an accident.

Potty Training and Bathroom Accidents

Children in the **2's/3's** "Grow and Go" classes are *not required* to be potty trained. Teachers will discuss each child's potty training progress with parents/guardians, and will encourage going to the potty.

While children in the **3's**, **4's**, and **Pre-K 4's/5's** classes are expected to come to class wearing underwear and able to use the potty, we realize that accidents can and *do* occur. That is why it is important to always have a spare change of clothes in your child's tote bag/backpack. *Repeated* accidents during class may result in a child's placement being on hold until significant progress is made in potty training.

Discipline

The Grace Christian Preschool teachers take a positive approach to discipline by acknowledging and reinforcing good behaviors, speaking to a child about what behavior is expected of him/her, redirecting a child to different activities, or sending a child to a quiet area (a safe place where a child can calm himself/herself).

Grace Christian Preschool has a right to dismiss a child for *serious inappropriate behavior which detrimentally impacts classmates and teachers, and interferes with the positive learning environment of the class.*

Withdrawal

If it is necessary to withdraw a child, a 30-day written notice to the school director is required, or tuition is non-refundable. No withdrawals can be accepted after April 1st. Tuition is not refundable for any temporary withdrawal or days missed due to illness, travel, etc.

Communication

Each *month*, you will receive a class calendar informing you of current and upcoming activities and events. Each *week*, the director will send an email update on school-wide happenings. Teachers will be communicating with you briefly at dismissal time about the activities that day. It is each parent's responsibility to read information sent home. Any questions or concerns should be directed to your child's teachers by way of a note in the class folder, phone call to the Preschool Office at **717-566-8260**, or email to your child's teachers or the director.

Water Breaks and Monthly Treats

During each class session, there will be opportunities for water breaks. Children in the 3's, 4's, and Pre-K 4's/5's classes are encouraged to bring a water bottle *filled with **water*** from home each day; for any child who does not bring a water bottle from home, we will serve water in small bathroom-sized cups. We will not be offering snacks during class time, except during the once-a-month classroom birthday celebrations, to recognize all the student birthdays that month. The Preschool director will purchase a snack for each birthday celebration day based upon any student allergies in each classroom. Since snacks are not being offered in class on a regular basis, parents are encouraged to make sure that their child has a healthy meal before coming to school, and to have a snack available to eat in the car before coming inside for class, as well as after dismissal.

Birthdays

Your child's birthday is a big event, and while we will be celebrating *all* monthly birthdays one day each month with a food treat purchased by the Preschool, we welcome you to send in a ***non-food treat*** to class to help celebrate your child's own birthday. Stickers, removable tattoos, play dough, and bubbles are favorites!

Sharing Time

Our classrooms are all equipped with many age-appropriate toys and supplies, so please remember to ***leave your child's toys at home*** or in the car so they don't get lost in a classroom. Your child's teachers will make you aware of planned times to share items from home. If you have something special that you'd like to share with the rest of the class for curriculum enrichment, please first talk to your child's teacher.

NO TOY GUNS OR WEAPONS are allowed!

Mid-Year Student Progress Reports

Half-way through the school year, teachers will be completing progress reports to let you know how your child is doing at preschool. Forms will be sent home by early February, and parents will be asked to return the signed form to indicate that they have reviewed it. Afterwards, if a Parent/Teacher Conference is needed, parents or teachers can request a meeting at a time of mutual convenience.

Preschool Office Hours

If you need to contact the director with Preschool-related concerns, please call the office at **717-566-8260** between 7:30AM-4:30PM, send a text message through *ClassDojo*, or send an email message to Mrs. Hoover at heidihover@gracehummelstown.org.