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Welcome to our Preschool! Throughout this handbook, you will find our policies and procedures that have been put in place to ensure that our school is safe and secure for your child. We encourage you to read through the handbook and ask any questions you may have. We are here to be a partner with you in your child’s well-being and education! **Please sign** and return the last page with your child’s enrollment paperwork.

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**MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

**Mission Statement**

Building Disciples of Christ through Faith-based Education

**Proverbs 22:6**

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

**Vision Statement**

Little Blessings Preschool provides a loving and caring environment, recognizing one another as fellow members of the body of Christ and valuing each person’s uniqueness as a gift from the Lord. We strive for excellence in our preschool by fostering spiritual, academic, and social growth.

Our dedicated, Christian staff cares, disciplines, guides, and teaches each child for a successful Christian life.

Parents and teachers work together to prepare our students to be lifelong learners, who can apply their knowledge and skill in meeting life’s challenges.

If a parent has a concern/grievance/question please talk to the teachers about any of these. Our door is always open.

**Philosophy of Little Blessings Preschool**

Little Blessings Preschool is unique because it offers:

* The acceptance of each student as a child of God.
* Daily instruction in God’s Word.
* Teaching and learning and play activities guided by the Holy Spirit.
* Guidance and love based upon the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, our Savior.
* Christian teachers who are models for Christian principles and living.
* Academic courses taught in the light of God’s Word.
* The total development of a child’s spiritual, emotional, academic, physical, and social needs.
* An education for now and for eternity.

**PROGRAM**

Our program recognizes that certain psychological conditions exist in every child. When these conditions, such as individual differences, readiness, motivations, purposes, and interests are met, the child can learn. Each child will be treated with respect and love, and the program will be geared to incorporate activities relevant to his/her individual needs.

We offer Religion, Experimental Natural Sciences, Large Muscle Development, Fine Motor Development, Counting and Name Recognition, Rhythm Band and Music, Safety, Quiet and Active Play, Story Time, Creative Dramatics, Painting, Crafts, Listening Skills, and Cooking. These are incorporated into units such as Community Helpers, Transportation, Animals, Families, Seasons, Space, and many more.

We are in prayer at least two times a day. We read a Bible story and say the Lord’s Prayer. We also pray before eating. Jesus Time is a session of 10-15 minutes that centers around Jesus, My Best Friend. We also have chapel twice a month for all four classes.

We offer a “**centers approach”** to learning. The children participate in Free Choice Play Time.

**Children participate with these developmental domains daily:**

* **Approaches to Learning**
* **Creative Arts**
* **Health and Physical Development**
* **Language and Literacy Development**
* **Social and Emotional Development**

Things we will work on during the school year include:

* identifying and naming colors
* writing names
* recognizing their names, alphabet, address, birthdays, shapes, and numbers
* learning sequences for the older children (Pre-K)
* knowing the meaning of the phrases- in front of, behind, besides, on top, on bottom, etc.
* naming the days of the week in order and the months of the year (for the older children)
* being able to sit for an amount of time depending on the different age groups
* knowing their phone numbers
* writing simple words (Pre-K class only)

We will do all of this during circle time, large group time, art or science time, and at free play time. We encourage the children to use their words and not their hands when it comes to their peers. We teach the children to use their manners-excuse me, thank you, please, may I, etc. We also encourage the children to solve their own problems. For example, if they just come and tell the teacher without trying to solve it for themselves, we encourage them to solve it themselves. We will help out, but we ask them what they should say and how they could make this problem better.

1. LICENSING:

Little Blessings strives to meet and exceed all child care licensing regulations. Little Blessings is licensed by the State of Nebraska Child Care Licensing Department. Parents will be notified of any changes or infractions in the Licensing agreement. DHHS will make two unannounced visits a year to make sure that the preschool is in compliance.

*Our facility is licensed for children ages 3-6. Capacity for the preschool is 38 children during the school year. Children must be potty-trained before they can be accepted into our program.*

1. ADMINISTRATION:

Little Blessings Preschool is an agency of Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School. Emmanuel Lutheran Church and Faith Lutheran Church together operate and support Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School through which is offered a Christian education for children in Preschool through 8th grade.

1. ENROLLMENT:

All children are welcome, regardless of race, religion, sex, or national ancestry.

All required state forms must be completed and returned prior to the first day of class.

**Nondiscrimination Policy**

Little Blessings Preschool admits students of any race, color, sex, and national and ethnic origin to all 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, sex, and national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship, and other school administered programs.

A parent or guardian may apply for enrollment by completing the enrollment packet and submitting an enrollment deposit. Once complete, parents will be notified if the child is accepted.

The enrollment packet includes:

* Enrollment Form
* Signed Receipt of Parent Handbook
* Copy of Child’s Up-to-date Immunization Records
* Photo Release Form

1. TUITION AND FEES:

**There will be a one time a year registration fee of $50.00. This fee is non-refundable. The fee will help cover the cost of materials for each child.**

The monthly tuition is due on the first class day of each month.

1. $110 for children attending both the two-day program or three-day program that are members of Emmanuel or Faith Lutheran congregations
2. $125 for children attending both the two-day program or three-day program that are non-members of Emmanuel or Faith congregations

If tuition for any given month is not paid on the first class day of the month, the student may attend preschool for that week. If, however, tuition is not fully paid on the first class day of the next month, then the student may no longer attend preschool; and a student on the waiting list may be allowed to fill the vacancy. Payments after the 15th will be charged a $5.00 late fee. Checks should be made payable to **Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School**.

**Emmanuel and Faith Worship Attendance Policy for the member tuition rate:**

We desire that each Emmanuel-Faith student reach their full potential, living a life of growth spiritually, socially, and academically.  In this, we believe that church attendance is of high importance. It is a place we can all come together to worship, be encouraged and learn from God’s words for spiritual growth.  Colossians 3:16 tells us, “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”  In Romans 10:17, we are reminded that “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.” Worshiping on a regular basis strengthens the relationship that we have with our Lord and Savior.

It is our desire that all students attend worship on a regular basis.  However, the worship attendance policy applies specifically to families who indicate membership at either Emmanuel or Faith Lutheran Church, for the purpose of the Emmanuel or Faith member tuition rate.

The worship attendance policy dictates that the Emmanuel or Faith family unit must attend an average of no less than two services per month. Active family membership, as required for the member tuition rate, requires worship as a family unit, throughout the calendar year.

Church attendance at worship services will be monitored through attendance registers in the church pews.  It is important that a family member take the time to register their attendance. If you worship at a different church on a particular Sunday, please bring a church bulletin to the church office to be recorded.  It is expected that the majority of church attendance take place at the church of your membership, Emmanuel or Faith Lutheran Church.

The Emmanuel-Faith School Board has established the following procedures should the attendance policy not be met:

1. Families will be contacted to remind them of the policy.  This communication will attempt to assist the family if there are ways in which the spiritual needs are not being met.
2. If the attendance policy is not met, the community tuition rate will be assessed, until such time that the Emmanuel-Faith School Board agrees the Worship Attendance Policy has been fulfilled.
3. We recognize there may be certain circumstances, which might prohibit a family from completing their commitment. Should this be the case, please contact the school principal, and he will direct your concerns to the appropriate individuals.

The goal of this policy is to help our families grow in our faith and to grow closer to our risen Savior, Jesus Christ, through worship and the Holy Sacrament.   It is our goal that 2 Timothy 3:15 will become a reality, through faithful attendance, worship and study: “From childhood, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise.”

**3- & 4-Year-Old Classes meet on Tuesdays & Thursdays**

**8:30 – 11:30 am (morning class) 12:30-3:30 pm (afternoon class)**

**Pre-Kindergarten Classes meet on Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays**

**8:00 – 11:00 am (morning class) 12:00 – 3:00 pm (afternoon class)**

1. CONFIDENTIALITY:

Information about your child and family is confidential. The state recently passed a law for Early Childhood Centers that keeps us from giving out class lists or phone numbers.

**Release of Children**

Children will not be dismissed with anyone except a parent or someone designated by parents. In the event that it is necessary for someone other than those named on the emergency contact file sheet, a written note or phone call to the teacher is necessary.

All child files will be kept in a locked file cabinet or in a inted computer server. Parents or guardians are permitted access to their child’s file at any time.

EXCEPTIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY: By law and licensing regulations, all staff of Little Blessings are mandated reporters and must report any and all suspected child abuse and neglect.

1. PARENTS RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS:

Parents are welcome to visit Little Blessings at any time and are encouraged by the teacher to do so during the normal operations and have access to their child’s information file upon request unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. Grandparents, who sometimes are more available during the day, are also encouraged to participate.

1. Visit your child’s classroom at any time.
2. Share your cultural or ethnic background with your child’s class.
3. Join your child’s class for special days or parties.
4. ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES:

Please accompany your child to the classroom each day. We ask that you **arrive no earlier than 10 minutes prior to** **school starting**. Promptly pick up your child at the end of the session. If you need to bring your child earlier than 10 minutes before class or pick up 10 minutes after class, please let us know ahead of time. **For those children that are brought in earlier or later than the specified time, we will charge an extra fee.**

PICK-UP

When picking up a child from Little Blessings, the parent must come inside of the building and wait for the teacher to escort your children down the stairway to the lobby of the church. Once a parent or guardian has their child, they are then solely responsible for supervising their child while on premises. Only those who are listed on the child’s emergency contact form will be

permitted to pick up a child. If any staff are unsure or have not met the adult, a form of ID will be required. Parents or adults picking the child up are required to sign any incident/accident reports from that day at pick up. Staff/Director will notify 911 or the police if an unauthorized person or authorized person who is visibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol requests to pick the child up.

AGENCY’S RIGHT TO REFUSE DAILY ATTENDANCE

Little Blessings Preschool reserves the right to refuse a child’s attendance for any of the following reasons, not limited to:

1. Parent’s failure to provide accurate, up to date records
2. Parent’s failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion
3. Staff deems the child to be ill
4. TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TRIPS:

Little Blessings Preschool does not offer transportation. With this, unfortunately, due to new state laws for preschools, we won’t be taking any field trips that require the children to be driven. We will still take our last day field trips, but we require parents to drive their own children.

1. INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES:

If school (at Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran) is cancelled due to bad weather, our classes will also be canceled. If a two-hour late start occurs, there will not be classes for the morning preschool sessions. If afternoon classes are to be dismissed early due to snow or icy conditions, we will call you if classes are already in session. If weather is looking bad, please listen to the local radio and/or television stations for late starts and cancellations.

1. FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS:

Fire and emergency drills will be conducted throughout the preschool according to Nebraska State Fire Marshal and Child Care Licensing Standards. The drills are done once a month with documentation about the drill posted in the classrooms. Each classroom will have both plans visibly displayed, and these drills will be practiced with all children. In case of emergency or disaster, the children will be evacuated to a nearby building (parsonage), and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

10.1 EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY-

***Blizzard:***

Cancellation or early closure is determined by weather reports and Emmanuel-Faith School; parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up children. We will have quiet play time until all children have been picked up. Staff will stay with children until all have been picked up.

***Earthquake****:*

As determined by staff, children and staff we will go to the hallway near the bathrooms. If outside, children and staff will move away from the building. If there is structural damage to the building, children will walk with staff members to the field to the east. The children will be counted, and parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up their children.

***Bombs:***

Any staff informed of a bomb threat will communicate with all other staff members in the building through telephone or personal contact. All children will be taken to the open field across the street to the south of the school. Police will be contacted, and further evacuation procedures will be followed under police direction. If there is cold or inclement weather, children and staff will go to the Holthus Field House to the south of the school. Children’s emergency forms will be taken when leaving the building. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up children.

***Fire:***

When a fire emergency is detected, we will evacuate according to fire drill instructions posted in classrooms. The children will be counted. When possible, children’s emergency forms will be taken. If the weather is inclement, children and staff will walk to the parsonage. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to pick up children.

***Tornado:***

When tornado drills are sounded or other determination of danger is verified, children will be moved to the basement hallway away from windows. The children will be instructed to cover their heads in a crouching position. If structural damage occurs, then police will be notified. If structural damage occurs, staff members and children will walk to Holthus Field House. Children’s emergency forms will be taken if leaving the building.

***Power Failure:***

Children will remain in classrooms, and we will continue to follow scheduled activities if possible. We will contact parents to pick up children if early closing is necessary.

***Intoxicated Parents:***

Staff members will attempt to detain the parent. Another staff member will contact another person from the emergency contact list and request pick up. We will inform the intoxicated parent of the pick-up plan. If unable to contact another pick up person, the child must be allowed to leave with the parent. We will inform the parents that the police will be called. Staff will call the police to inform them of the situation.

***Intruder:***

If it is determined that an intruder may be harmful, then staff members will be instructed to take children out the back door and go to the parsonage. Staff members will attempt to assist the intruder while another staff member will contact the police depending on the situation. We will proceed as instructed by the police. If determined necessary, staff members may be instructed to take the children to the parsonage (if the situation becomes volatile or as instructed by police). All parents will be contacted if necessary.

***Lost or Abducted Children***:

One staff member will remain with children while a second staff member will alert others in the building to assist in the search for the lost child. If the child is not found in ten minutes, staff will contact parents and the police. Staff will proceed as directed by the police.

***Chemical Spills:***

Staff and children will leave the area immediately. A staff member will contact the York Fire Department and follow their directions. Staff and children will evacuate the building according to fire department instructions, if necessary, children and staff will go to Holthus Field House across the street. Staff will take children’s emergency records if leaving the building and will call parents if necessary.

10.2 ALTERNATIVE SAFE LOCATION-

In the event that the Little Blessings Preschool must be evacuated, staff will take the children to an alternative location. Once the children are safely at the alternative location, staff or the Director will contact all parents beginning with the first person listed on the child’s emergency contact form. Children must be picked up within 45 minutes of notification.

1. DISCIPLINE:

The guidance philosophy used at Little Blessings is based on positive reinforcement. The basic premise of this concept is that it is better to acknowledge positive behavior whenever possible rather than punish negative behavior. We also believe the more interesting things children have to do, the less likely there are to be discipline problems.

Time outs are used as a last resort. This gives the child time to “cool-off” and calm down and decide to comply with the rules. The child is always placed where they can be seen and heard by the teacher. The length of the time-out will never exceed one minute for each year of age. Spanking is **NEVER** used as a form of discipline.

Please do not be discouraged if your child is disciplined. Children act out and test boundaries as an approach to learning, and this is expected in all stages of development. Little Blessings staff promises to work together with parents in order to be consistent in reinforcing positive behaviors both at home and at school.

We understand that discipline is not the same thing as punishment. Rather, discipline equals discouraging behavior and promoting good behavior through guidance, teaching, and role-modeling. Discipline is an on-going process and an integral part of the curriculum. It is our ultimate goal to foster self-discipline and self-control in the young children we affect.

12. TOYS:

Please discourage your child from bringing personal items unless it is his/her preschool show and tell time. Many children playing with a toy could mean accidental breakage or loss; Little Blessings Preschool will not be responsible for any lost or damaged items brought from home.

12.1 SHOW AND TELL-

Your child has the privilege of bringing show and tell. Children may bring toys, books, photographs, and other items of interest to talk about. Please label anything delicate or precious so we can keep it strictly to “look at but don’t touch.” Please, **NO** toy guns or weapons. Pets may visit us in the classroom if the owner will bring them in. Any such visits should be arranged beforehand with the teacher, in case there would be any allergies. Days for Show and Tell will be brought up at a later date after school has started and routine is formed.

13. SNACKS:

Parents will be asked to provide snacks for their child’s class several times during the school year. We need to comply with licensing and provide a nutritious snack. Homemade snacks are not allowed. We can’t serve hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoons of peanut butter, or chunks of raw carrot. Remember this is a snack, not a meal; small portions of both foods are very appropriate. The drink will be furnished.

14. CPR/FIRST AID:

All staff at Little Blessings will be trained by an approved entity in CPR and First Aid.

14.1 HAND WASHING-

All preschool staff will be trained in proper hand washing techniques and will model those techniques with children prior to meal times and after toileting. Staff are required to properly wash their hands before snack and after helping a child with toileting.

14.2 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES-

Little Blessings will inform you of any communicable disease your child may have come in contact with while in our care. Children with detection of illness, communicable disease, or unusual conditions or behavior will be given a quiet place to rest until a parent or other authorized person can pick up the child. ***Please do not send your sick child to preschool.*** We do our best by hand washing and sanitizing to prevent the spread of germs, but we need your help in preventing exposure to contagious diseases by keeping sick children at home.

If you child has any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours, he/she should not attend preschool:

temperature over 100.4 degrees

head lice

influenza

diarrhea

impetigo

RSV

vomiting

chicken pox

rotavirus

ringworm

severe coughing

pink eye

scabies

yellowish skin or eyes

fifth disease

14.3 DISPENSING OF MEDICATIONS-

It is our policy that **NO** medications will be administered by our preschool staff.

## 15. ORIENTATION:

The following suggestions are made to assist you in helping your child in their orientation to Little Blessings and in assuring a smooth, successful transition for the parent and child. An “orientation night” will be scheduled before the first day of school. Parents are encouraged to participate in the scheduled orientation time. This allows the child an opportunity to observe or participate for the first time with the security of a parent present. At this time, parents are encouraged to visit with the staff members, asking any further questions they might have.

If your child has difficulty separating from you on the first days, the following suggestions are helpful: 1- Don’t prolong good-byes; 2- Cheerfully tell your child you love him/her and you know that they’ll have a fun day and finally what time you will return to pick them up; and 3- Give him/her a big hug and kiss, then firmly and quickly walk away.

Little Blessings Preschool Director/Teacher, Libby Brouillette

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Phone: 402-362-3000

Emmanuel-Faith Lutheran School Principal, Brad Wellmann

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Child’s Name

I have read and agree to the terms of the Little Blessings handbook and understand the policies, procedures, and payment agreement explained in it.

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Parent Signature Date

I have read and understand the Little Blessings Preschool Emergency Disaster plan.

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Parent Signature Date