Messiah Lutheran School

Early Childhood Center

Parent Handbook

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Child Care Director:

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*PARENTS PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO READ THIS INFORMATION ALSO CHECK YOUR CHILDS FOLDERS DAILY. ANY CLOSINGS, CHANGES, AND UPDATES WILL ALWAYS BE SENT VIA TEXT AND/OR EMAIL IF YOU ARE NOT RECEIVING NOTIFICATIONS PLEASE LET THE DIRECTOR KNOW.

POLICIES and PROCEDURES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Messiah Early Childhood Center is a full-time childcare and learning center that currently offers full-time childcare. We offer part-time spots for ages 12 months to 24 months, but spots are limited.

Messiah Early Childhood Center does not provide specialty care for sick children. Sick children are defined as: children with illnesses or symptoms that prevent them from comfortable participation in activities in a program caring for well children and require more care than personnel in a program caring for well children can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children in their care.

ELIGIBLE CHILDREN: The Center provides care for children between the ages of 6 weeks to 3 years old.

HOURS OF OPERATION: The Center is open Monday through Friday. The program is closed on Saturday and Sunday. Hours and Closures for holidays and staff development days will be noted on the school calendar each year. We will close at 3:45 on the last Friday of each month to allow staff do a deep clean of the facilities.

COMPLIANCE FILE LOCATION: The Center compliance file is available to parents during normal hours of operation and is located in the director's office.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: Messiah Early Childhood Center may close in the event of inclement weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. We will publicize this through the local television and radio stations. We take other metro area school closures into consideration when making our decision. Parents are advised to take special note of the school closing notices and look specifically for "Messiah Lutheran School – Oklahoma City" on the lists. Delayed opening or early release times are also a possibility. Sources of information during inclement weather include: KFORTV CH. 4 / KOCOTV CH. 5 / KWTV CH. 9 / KTOK 1000 AM / KOMA 1520 AM.

We will also send an alert through the Brightwheel app.

There will be no refunds issued due to inclement weather.

LOCK DOWN PROCEDURE: When necessary, Messiah Early Childhood Center will lock-down the facility. Children will be kept in their classrooms with the doors locked. No one will be allowed to enter or leave the facility. Parents will be notified through the Brightwheel as soon as possible when the lock down is in effect and/or when it is lifted. We ask that parents remain calm and patient during this time and do NOT phone the office as there may not be anyone to answer if we are tending to the children. Our goal will be to focus on keeping your children as safe as possible.

PARKING LOT CONDITIONS: Please note that even though the road conditions are good, our parking lot may be covered in ice/snow. We advise caution when driving or walking on the parking lot surface in

hazardous (icy) conditions. We will not be held responsible for injuries sustained in the parking lot when the parking lot is hazardous. We are not able to spread salt over the entire parking lot surface.

TORNADO DRILL: Messiah Early Childhood Center will practice tornado drills monthly. We may choose to close early due to approaching storms. Parents will be notified by Brightwheel in a timely manner.

In cases of actual hazardous weather conditions in which students have taken shelter, parents are requested not to put themselves at risk by traveling to the school or by taking students out of the building while dangerous conditions prevail. Please take care of your own safety and allow us to provide for the safety of your child.

FIRE DRILL: Messiah Early Childhood Center practices monthly fire drills.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE: The objective of this plan is to reduce the possibility of harm to the children, staff, and visitors to the Center in the event of an emergency. In the event of an evacuation emergency, the children will be taken as a group to designated areas away from the building in the South Parking Lot. Parents will be notified by text as soon as possible.

EVACUATION PLAN: An evacuation plan is posted in each Center classroom.

HEALTH MONITORING: Each child is observed initially and throughout the hours of care for symptoms of illness or poison exposure and obvious signs of infestation or physical injuries.

PARENT NOTIFICATION: Parents will be notified by the Center whenever their child may have been exposed to any communicable disease, infestation, poisonous chemical or plant, or suspected physical injury.

In the event of secondary exposure to communicable disease or infestation, the identity of the primary sick or infected child or personnel will remain confidential.

In the event of suspected physical injury that occurs during care by Center personnel, parents will be notified, and appropriate log entries will be maintained.

In the event of known or suspected poison exposure, the poison control Center will be contacted with product and manufacturing information taken from the MSDS file located in the Center Director's Office or the manufacturer container housing the poison (time permitting). In the event emergency transportation is warranted, 911 Emergency Services will be called. Parents will then be notified of the circumstances and destination Emergency Room where the child has been transported. If emergency transportation is not required, parents will be notified, and appropriate log entries will be maintained.

ILLNESS: Do not bring children when they have signs of any illness. Your child will be sent home if any of the following conditions exist:

- Undiagnosed rash (bring note from doctor if it has been diagnosed).
- Discharge from eyes or ears.
- Sore throat or persistent cough.
- Vomiting.
- Continuous diarrhea. (2 or more times)

- Head lice – This condition is prevalent in Oklahoma and is easily passed from student to student, especially in the lower grades, preschool, and childcare. Students suspected of having head lice shall be sent home and must be treated before readmission to the Center. If the condition persists, parents will need to submit documentation of a physician's visit, as well as proof of physician-advised treatment. When head lice are reported, our teachers will check all children.
- Any contagious disease.
- Child is not well enough to participate in daily activities.
- Fever as defined as a temperature exceeding 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit before medication. Young children are very susceptible to contract illnesses so the dismissal of any child will always be at the discretion of the director.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you, but the well-being of the children in our program is our first concern.

Do not bring your child unless they have been without these conditions for 24 hours. If your child should become ill at Messiah Early Childhood Center, you will be called and asked to pick your child up as soon as possible. Your child will be removed from the other children until you arrive, and they must be free of all symptoms for 24 hours (without being medicated) before returning.

For the following symptoms children may return as listed:

- Scabies, not until the morning after the first treatment
- Chicken pox, not until six days after onset of rash
- Whooping cough, not until five days of antibiotic treatment
- Mumps, not until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling
- Measles, not until four days after disappearance of the rash
- Flu, not until 24hrs after the child is fever and symptom free without fever reducing medication.

MEDICATION: No child will be administered medication unless the medicine is brought in its original container, labeled with the child's full name, and the child's guardian fills out a consent form. Medications will be stored in accordance with prescription or manufacturer's instructions. The Center will dispose of medical waste (syringes, needles, lancets, and epi-pens using an approved bio-hazard container.

SUN SAFETY METHODS: Center personnel will be mindful of local weather conditions and when appropriate make judicious use of shaded areas and shortened outdoor play activities (30 minutes or less). A parent may provide sunscreen to applied when a medication authorization form is completed.

INSECT REPELLENT: Because Messiah Lutheran Early Childhood Center has as ongoing contract for insect extermination and standing water is not a problem on or near the Center playground area, the Center does not use insect repellent on children during care. In the unlikely event that airborne biting insects become a problem, outdoor play activities will be suspended pending additional extermination services for the playground areas.

MANAGING PERSONAL BELONGINGS: Parents are required to clearly mark their child's personal belongings using a permanent marker. Specific labeling instructions are provided below. Whenever possible personal belongings will be stored separately. Parents are required to provide extra clothing for

their child in the child's bag. If the child's clothing becomes soiled, Center personnel will store the child's soiled clothing in a leak-proof bag and return the bag to the child's bag. Center does not launder soiled clothing.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN: Messiah Early Childhood Center does not provide child transportation of any kind. In the event of an emergency, parents will be notified, and the child released to the parent or parent's authorized adult representative. If parents cannot be contacted, 911 Emergency Services will be used. The parent will be notified of the circumstances requiring emergency evacuation and the destination hospital.

FIELD TRIPS: Messiah Early Childhood Center does not schedule field trips of any kind.

IMMUNIZATION RECORD: For us to meet DHS requirements every child is required to have a current up-to-date shot record on file. The Center will only make exceptions for medical reasons. In this case an Exemption form from the doctor will be required.

DISCIPLINE POLICY: Messiah Early Childhood Center follows a redirecting policy for most disciplinary issues. Children who exceed three redirecting periods will be removed from the classroom and parent/guardian informed; in some instances, pick up will be required. Teachers will provide feedback to parents daily on behavior as well as commendatory items for each child using daily sheets and/or the Remind app.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: Messiah Early Childhood Center staff is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect or if we believe the child is in danger of being abused or neglected to DHS. When this situation presents itself, teachers will fill out a form and notify the Center Director. The Center Director will notify DHS and file a copy of the report form. However, they also have the right to remain anonymous, in that case the director may or may not be aware that a report was made.

INFANT SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT: Infants will sleep in cribs that meet current DHS requirements full-size and non-full-size crib standards and have mattresses that are firm, designed to fit the specific crib with one-inch or less between the mattress and crib, and are covered with a durable, washable, waterproof, form-fitting material.

While in cribs infants will sleep directly on tight-fitting sheets covering the mattress. Blankets are not allowed in or on cribs. Infants will be protected from overheating by adjusting room temperature and clothing.

Only pacifiers without attachments to them are allowed in cribs with infants.

Infants' six-weeks to three months of age may be swaddled with an infant-sized, thin fabric, such as a receiving blanket, only when requested by parents in writing and only until such time as the infant is not mobile enough to move the fabric over his or her face.

Infants are also allowed to use approved sleep sacks.

GAINING ACCESS WHEN THE BUILDING IS SECURED: The Center doors will always remain locked. During normal hours of operations, parents and visitors to the Center may gain access to the building using the phone system on the right-hand side of the door. After normal hours of operation, if necessary, parents

may gain access by using the intercom system at the main Church doors to the east of the Center doors only if there are personnel available in the church or school offices.

RECEIVING CHILDREN: Children will be received from the legal guardian or an authorized adult (18 years or older) only. Parents will check their children in the Center using the Brightwheel kiosk in the Center common area or via the app on their own device. Because the Center does not provide child transportation of any type; that task falling to either the parent or an authorized adult; we do not contact parents when children are absent. We do, however, request that parents contact the Center ahead of any scheduled child absences or as soon as possible for unscheduled absences at (405) 946-0605 or lstark@messiahokc.org . **All children must be in the Center no later than 10 am.**

RELEASING CHILDREN: Children will be released to the legal guardian or an authorized adult (18 years or older) only. Parents will check their children out of the Center using the tablet located at the ProCare kiosk in the Center common area. You must inform the office if you want your child picked up by anyone else.

Parents are responsible to update their Brightwheel account with information for anyone they intend to have pick up their child on a routine basis. In extraordinary or emergency circumstances, parents may authorize someone other than those on record to pick up their child. In those cases, parents are required to provide: the period of time the authorization is valid, and the full name of the individual being given authorization. That individual will be required to show a form of identification.

INJURY: In case of injury, an accident form is filled out by the teacher, the director and parents are notified. If medical treatment is needed, we follow the instructions as to which doctor and hospital to use, as indicated on the enrollment form.

ENROLLMENT FEE: This is a one time, per program, nonrefundable fee equal to half a month's tuition.

CHILD PLACEMENT: Placement of your child in the proper room is very important to us. The placement of your child will always be made with your child's best interest at heart. The placement will be at the discretion of the childcare director and the teachers involved.

PAYMENT POLICY: Payments are due on the 1st of each month and considered late after 10:00am on the 5th of the month. If your payment is not paid by the 5th, there will be a late charge of 10% of the balance due. If you miss one month's payment, and two months are due, you will be contacted by the Center Director. Your child may be released from the program on the 5th of the second month at the discretion of the Director. If you are experiencing short-term financial problems or need other payment arrangements, please speak to the Director so that arrangements may be made.

Delinquent accounts will be submitted to collections.

To protect the integrity of our financial process, payment by check is ONLY to be placed in the locked mailbox outside the director's office.

ENROLLMENT COMMITMENT: You will be charged a flat monthly fee for each program regardless of the number of days or weeks in each month. If you chose to remove your child early, you must give a 2-week notice. If less than 2 weeks' notice is given, a total of 2 weeks' tuition will be required from the date of notification.

If your program needs to change – and provided a vacancy exists in the requested program, you may request to change programs the following month. You will need to notify the office *no later than the 15th of the month* prior to the needed change. If you are unable to notify the office and need an immediate change (provided a space is available) in your child's schedule, you will be charged appropriately.

ADDING DAYS: Your account must be current and in good standing to request a program change for your child.

DROP IN POLICY: We do not provide this service.

ABSENCES: Please call the office, message on Brightwheel, or email by 9:00 a.m. and let us know if your child is going to be absent. If your child is absent, we do not refund any money for the days missed. If your child is absent two consecutive weeks without notification, we have the right to release your child from the program. All monies owed will be due upon release.

DIAPERS: Every family is required to bring one large bag of diapers and one large box of wet wipes per child at the beginning of their enrollment. You will be notified via the Brightwheel app when your child's supply is running low. We will supply diapers for you at a rate of $2 per diaper if your child's supply runs out.

POTTY TRAINING: When a child can communicate that he or she needs to go potty, we consider them potty trained. When a child is not able to communicate that they need to go potty and they must be taken to the restroom frequently to avoid accidents, we do not consider them potty trained. We are more than happy to help you in the potty-training process, but we do ask that you respect our viewpoint. Children in the 24 – 35 month class must be well on their way to being potty trained. Children 36 months and up must be completely potty trained before entering Messiah's preschool class.

BOTTLES: We only allow bottles in our newborn – 12 month class. Parents will provide enough clean bottles for their child each day to meet their needs. We require that you label each bottle first & last name. Breast Milk must be labeled with first & last name, expressed date, and the date it was brought into the Center.

SIPPY-CUPS AND DINNERWARE: parents will provide two, labeled, sippy-cups for each child; one for milk and one for juice and water.

LABELING ITEMS: We require that you label all your child's items with their full name, i.e., cups, diapers, clothing, blankets, coats, EVERYTHING you bring here for your child must be labeled.

MEALS: A nutritionally balanced meal and snacks with beverage will be provided for your child each day at no extra charge. Parents can provide meals, snacks, or both for their children. You will need to send their food in the proper insulated container to keep hot or cold. We welcome store bought classroom snack donations, please check with the Center Director for nutrition and allergy purposes. Please remember we are a NUT FREE facility.

ARRIVAL TIME: We open at 7:45 a.m. We start our curriculum at 8:30am. It is not required that you arrive exactly at 8:30 a.m., but it is important that you try to be here as close to 8:30 a.m. as possible. All children must be checked in by 10 a.m. If your child has an appointment please contact the Director, and a doctor statement must be provided after 10 a.m.

MORNING DROP OFF TIME: We ask that you make arrival time as easy as possible for all the children and staff. To do this, we do **not** allow parents to remain in the classroom. Please give your child a hug and say good-bye. You are welcome to remain in the building if your child cannot see you.

PICK UP TIME: Please be prompt in picking up your children. Students who are not checked-out from the Center by 5:30 p.m. will be charged a late fee of $1 per minute for each additional minute their child remains in care up to $60. If the Center is not able to contact you and your child is not checked-out by 6:30 p.m. we will contact the local authorities who will assume custody of the child or they may coordinate with Child Protective Services to assume custody of the child.

Parents may pick their children up at any time during normal operating hours. No proration or refund of tuition will be granted for early pick up.

CHECK IN/OUT: All children must be checked in and out daily. If you are unable to do so you will need to notify the Center Director as soon as possible.

DRESS CODE: It is the parent's responsibility to send children in clothing and shoes appropriate for indoor and outdoor play. Our teachers do plan a craft project every day for your child to enjoy and we cannot be responsible for any damage done to your child's clothes. NO OPEN TOE SHOES.

TOY POLICY: Children are not allowed to bring toys from home. If your child brings a toy to class, we will not be responsible for missing or damaged toys.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY: Messiah Early Childhood Center does not discriminate based on race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship or tuition assistance programs, and other CENTER-administered programs.

DISMISSAL POLICY: Messiah Early Childhood Center reserves the right to release any child from the program. If your child's physical or emotional needs are disruptive, it may be necessary to release the child from the program. We are not equipped to handle some special needs. A child may be discharged from the CENTER if:

- It is determined that the child's needs are not being met at the CENTER.
- If the parent does not comply with the policies of the CENTER.
- If the child is harmful to other children, staff, or themselves.
- If it is determined that a child is disruptive, uncooperative, or in any other way disturbs the other children or the program.

CENTER ORIENTATION AND TOURS: Parents are encouraged to schedule a tour of the Messiah Early Childhood Center facility with the Director. Regardless of your denomination or spiritual beliefs, we encourage new parents to attend at least one church service to get a feel for the culture and family ministry environment at Messiah.

FEEDBACK ON THIS MANUAL: The Early Childhood Center welcomes your feedback on the contents and ease of use of this handbook. Please feel free to call or email the Director, Linda Stark at (405) 946-0605 or lstark@messiahokc.org.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Messiah Lutheran Early Childhood Center exists as an integral part of the Messiah Lutheran School ministry. The Center is family-focused and designed to provide developmentally appropriate childcare in a church setting where children of all faiths, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds are embraced, taught, and cared for, as a reflection of Christ's love for all people.

We are committed to:

- Providing learning experiences that are Christ-Centered
- Respecting individuality, while helping children benefit from the group experience
- Promoting the growth of the whole child
- Employing teachers who demonstrate Christian values
- Supporting families as they meet the challenges of daily life
- Providing childcare facilities that are clean, well maintained, and programs that are reasonably priced.