



Our Redeemer's Preschool

Parent Handbook

2023-2024



A ministry of

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church

3580 N. Benton Ave. Helena, MT 59602 406-442-7842

Our Redeemer's Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions, tuition assistance or any other school-administered programs.



Contact Information

Our phone number is 442-7842. Extensions are:

- Three's Classroom 22
- Four's Classroom 23
- Pre-K Classroom 24
- Director 20



If your child will not be in attendance for the day, please call and let us know. You can always leave a message with the church secretary at the same number above.

Class Schedules

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| M/W Threes (Ms. Maw) | 8:45 - 11:00 Monday & Wednesday |
| Tu/Th Threes (Ms. Maw) | 8:45 - 11:00 Tuesday & Thursday |
| AM Fours (Mrs. Grissom) | 8:40 - 11:10 Tues/Wed/Thurs |
| PM Fours (Mrs. Grissom) | 11:45 - 2:15 Tues/Wed/Thurs |
| AM Pre-K (Mrs. Vukonich) | 8:20 - 11:20 Monday - Thursday |
| PM Pre-K (Mrs. Vukonich) | 12:00 - 3:00 Monday - Thursday |
| Lunch Bunch (Director) | 11:00 - 12:15 Monday - Thursday |

Policies in this handbook may change. Any policy updates will be sent home as paper copies to all families. We encourage you to direct any questions to a staff member.

Welcome to a new school year at Our Redeemer's Preschool! This handbook contains pertinent information regarding our program and the documents we need from you prior to the first day of preschool. We ask that you please read it thoroughly before school begins. Thank you!

Our Philosophy. At Our Redeemer's Preschool, we believe school should be a happy place where children are loved and cared for in a Christian environment.

Program Goals. Our goal is to meet each child where he/she is and help him/her develop in these areas:

- ♦ Spiritual Development: experiencing God's loving presence in our lives
- ♦ Social and Emotional Development: self-esteem, independence, trust in people, respecting others, working and learning cooperatively, problem-solving with peers
- ♦ Language and Emergent Reading and Writing Development: an ability to express themselves, listen and use writing tools, encourage a love of books and reading
- ♦ Emergent Math and Science Development: observation, Problem-solving, sequencing, sorting and classifying, recognizing patterns, becoming aware of cause and effect relationships
- ♦ Physical Development: activities to assist with gross and fine motor skills

Eligibility. All children meeting the age requirement (3 years of age on or before September 10th) are welcome to enroll at Our Redeemer's Preschool. There is no discrimination due to race, religion, or ethnic background. All students will be enrolled on a trial basis to determine if our preschool can meet the needs of each individual. In the unlikely event that your child is not having a beneficial experience or other children in our school are not having a beneficial preschool experience, due to actions of your child, a meeting will be held to discuss possible alternatives.

We ask that children be potty-trained or that the child is actively being potty-trained. Children should be able to address their bathroom needs independently for the most part.

Only children properly enrolled in the program will be able to attend. Please do not send visiting children.

Registration. By completing the registration form and submitting the supply fee, your child becomes officially enrolled in our program. The supply fee is non-refundable unless we are unable to place your child in a class.

Curriculum. We want your child to be exposed to a variety of learning experiences and believe that children learn through play. Our preschool environment invites children to discover at their own pace.

Each day, activities will provide the opportunity for your child to experience:

- Active and quiet play
- Individual and group activities
- Creative expression through art, music, and dramatic play
- Social interaction



Christian Centered Learning. Our Redeemer's Preschool is a Christian outreach to the community. In our preschool, children are introduced to God's love and the stories of the Bible. In addition, they are exposed to Christian character - being kind, helping one another, being responsible, sharing, and forgiving. Children are taught that they can always talk to God in prayer and that God always listens to our prayers.

The emphasis is placed on becoming acquainted with God through our routine: chapel time, stories, prayer before snack, and awareness of all that God has created. We emphasize the Christian aspect of major holidays.

School Calendar. Preschool begins after Labor Day and ends before Memorial Day. Our schedule may vary slightly from the Helena School District schedule, so please take note of those variations. There will be no school on days when the Helena schools are closed due to weather conditions. These days will not be made up or refunded.

Communication. We want parents to be involved in their child's preschool experience. If there is anything we should know about your child, please talk to us. Should you have any questions or concerns about the program or your child's well-being, please contact your child's teacher or the director. We welcome your constructive comments and suggestions.

Newsletters will be sent home regularly. Please take the time to read all correspondence.

Parent conferences, with a written evaluation of your child's progress, will be offered in late January. If you would like to set up a conference at any other time, let us know.



What we need from you prior to the first day of preschool, Tuesday, September 5th, 2023:

Enrollment Information. The following must be completed and received by the first day of school in order for your child to begin class:

- the Student Enrollment form;
- the Tuition Payment agreement;
- the Parent Questionnaire which assists the teacher in becoming familiar with your child and family;
- Immunization Documentation from your child's medical provider stating that your child is fully immunized in accordance with Montana law.

If your child is not fully immunized, a signed and notarized medical exemption or religious exemption must be submitted each year. The Immunization Exemption form is found on the Montana Department of Health and Human Services website at: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/publichealth/Immunization/HES101A.pdf>

Religious exemptions may be obtained from your religious institution.

Please make sure to bring the above listed items and your enrolled child to your orientation meeting. Both parents are encouraged to attend if possible. We know it can be difficult to find care for siblings, so if you are unable to do so, they may attend as well.

Note: Other documents/items needed as soon as possible, but no later than the first day of class are: Snack fee, Tuition ACH (if using monthly automatic tuition payment), Lunch Bunch (if participating).

First Day Goodbyes. Preschool may be the first time a child is away from their parents. We know this can be hard on both the parent and the child.

When you arrive on the first full day of school, give your child a friendly goodbye. Make it warm and brief, then exit and refrain from returning. The teacher will comfort an upset student, and success depends on consistency in the drop-off procedure. If your child discovers that you will return when he or she cries, a habit may begin that will grow more difficult in time. It works best for the child if parents do not linger, and most children settle down quickly once their adult is out of view.

Check-In and Check-Out. Your child's teacher will explain our check-in procedure. Students will be picked up on the playground, and we ask that you make sure the teacher/staff member sees you when you pick up your child. Only custodial parents and authorized persons may pick up your child. When another person is to pick up your child, the teacher and/or the director must be notified in advance.

Arrival and Dismissal. Please be aware of the start and end times of your child's class (inside front cover). If you arrive early, please wait in your vehicle to allow teachers to prepare for class. Teachers will come to the door welcome your child into the classroom when preparations are complete.

It is important that children be picked up on time. Please keep our phone number (406-442-7842, ext. 20) programmed in your cell phone in case of unexpected delays so we can let your child know you are on your way.

Parent Volunteers. Parents of 3 and 4-year-old-class students are needed to assist in the classroom an average of once a month. Parents of Pre-K students may also have occasional volunteer days. This is a wonderful opportunity to observe and participate in your child's daily learning experience.

Parent volunteers assisting in the classroom will be under the direct supervision of the teacher/staff member responsible for the class. Volunteers will not have unsupervised 1-1 contact with a child. The volunteer is an extra pair of hands and eyes, receiving specific directions from the teacher. Enjoy and interact with the children as you feel comfortable.

Please be aware that a child may exhibit different behaviors when his/her parent is in class. Fussing or clinging behaviors may occur; often, the less attention given in this circumstance, the faster the behaviors will stop.

If you are unable to be at school on your helper day, you are asked to secure a substitute and notify the teacher. You will receive a class roster at the beginning of the year to assist you in contacting others.

Social Media. In order to protect the right of privacy to families who wish to keep their children off social media, please refrain from posting photos taken at Pre-school (or Preschool events) on any social media platform, except those of your child.

School Supplies. Children need a backpack with their name clearly visible. A bag large enough for papers and projects that the child can open and close easily is best. Have your child bring their bag every day, and please check it after each class session. They will be eager to tell you about the work they bring home, and important notes and reminders may also be sent home via backpack.

Always keep an extra set of clothes, including underwear, in a Ziploc bag in the backpack.

Clothing. Your child should be comfortable. The children will be actively participating (sitting on the floor, kneeling, standing, and moving) at school, so their clothing should be suitable for play, and their shoes should be suitable for outdoor play. We use washable art supplies and do take precautions, but accidents will happen.

Water Bottle. Please keep a small, sturdy water bottle in your child's backpack. We will use it for drinks throughout the day (instead of the drinking fountain) and for snack time.

Snacks. We will provide a healthy snack to your child each day. If your child has special food issues, we will ensure that their dietary needs are met. We will be serving a wide variety of snack items, including fruits and vegetables. We do not require children to eat a snack, but will encourage them to give the snack a try.

A special snack to celebrate your child's birthday is welcome. This year we are unable to serve homemade treats, and we also ask that you avoid cupcakes due to their messiness. Alternatives include: ice cream cups, cookies, Rice Krispie treats with sprinkles or donut holes. Please speak to your child's teacher a few days in advance of the birthday date to plan treats.

Field Trips. Your child's class may be taking field trips throughout the year. Parents will be notified in advance and are encouraged to accompany us on any trip. Montana state law requires appropriate child/booster seats for all children under 6 years old/60 pounds. Plan to bring your child's seat on the day of a trip and install it in the vehicle in which they will be riding. Preschool policy also requires that we have proof of insurance on file from any parent who will be driving any child other than their own.

We are always looking for ideas for fun, educational field trips. We also love to have guest speakers tell us about something new. Let us know if you have suggestions!

Classroom Show and Tell, and Toys From Home. Each class will have a plan for sharing opportunities by the children, and the teacher will inform you of the details for sharing. If your child will be bringing a large or unusual show and tell (a pet, a baby sibling, etc.), please talk with your child's teacher to arrange the details. Toy guns and weapons are not allowed at school.

Please refrain from sending toys from home. Exceptions may be made for a child who temporarily needs a security blanket or stuffed toy, however, the item will be kept in your child's backpack.

Outdoor Play. We prioritize outside playtime each day. Please send proper outdoor clothing in all seasons so your child can enjoy their time - rain jacket, boots, hat, mittens, etc. *Please label each item of your child's outerwear with their name or initials.*

In cases of smoke, we will consult the Montana DEQ website and limit our outdoor time when needed.

In winter, we go out whenever the temperature is 10 or above. We use data from NOAA (as well as our best judgment) to determine if the wind or other factors will keep us inside. On cold days, we may shorten our time outside and will keep the children's safety and comfort in mind.

Illness. Please keep your child at home if there is any evidence of an illness such as fever (100+), the first "runny " stages of a cold, a bad cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Children should not return to school for at least 48 hours after their temperature has returned to normal. If your child becomes ill during class, you (or your authorized adult) will be called to pick the child up immediately. For this reason, it is imperative that all emergency contact numbers are current. Only parents will be able to dispense medications to their child, as the school staff may not administer any medications, with the exception of a life-threatening condition (such as an allergic reaction) needing immediate attention.

Please report any communicable diseases (including COVID) to us immediately so that all preschool families may be informed.

Discipline. A positive approach to discipline is followed. Children are familiarized with classroom expectations. They learn acceptable behavior through positive reinforcement, redirection, natural and logical consequences, setting limits, and giving choices. Focus is placed on the action rather than the child to build self-esteem and a healthy self-concept. We strive to help children learn skills necessary for successful living in our world; responsibility, decision-making, socialization, conflict resolution, and acceptance of others.

Emergency Procedures. We are prepared to ensure your child's safety in the event of an emergency at the school. We have safety procedures in place; each teacher has an emergency backpack with your contact information included. In the event that we have to evacuate the building, you will be notified as soon as possible regarding the situation and the well-being of your child.

Withdrawal. Children are enrolled for the full school year. In the unusual event that a parent needs to withdraw a child from the program, a thirty-day written notice must be submitted to the director. Your financial obligation will cease thirty days after notification or when your child leaves school, whichever is later. If parents wish to re-enroll a student who has withdrawn (provided space in the desired class is still available), they will be required to pay the supply fee again.

Extended Absence. If you should find it necessary to take an extended absence for any reason, tuition will remain your responsibility unless you withdraw your child.

Personal Records. Our Redeemer's Preschool keeps a file for each child to include personal information, progress reports and medical records. Files are kept in a locked file cabinet which is accessible to and maintained by the Preschool Director and the child's teacher. The children's records are confidential. Designated persons having access to a child's records will not discuss or disclose personal information regarding the child or the child's family.

Tuition and Fees. As a non-profit organization, the preschool operates within a budget determined by the tuition and fees it collects. Without the timely payment of tuition and fees by our families, we cannot operate effectively and efficiently.

- Tuition is due on the first class day of each month
- Accounts must be paid in full by the 15th of each month
- There will be a \$20 late fee assessed on payments made after the 15th unless prior arrangements have been made
- There will be a \$20 returned check charge
- Families with more than one child enrolled in Our Redeemer's Preschool will receive a \$5.00/month child reduction in fees. Preschool board members also receive this reduction.

Supply fee. This is non-refundable at the time a child is given placement. By completing the registration form and submitting the supply fee, your child becomes officially enrolled in our program. The supply fee is non-refundable unless we are unable to place your child in a class.

If a child is on the waiting list and is offered placement before September 15th of the current school year, and placement is refused, the supply fee is non-refundable. If a child is placed on the waiting list and is not offered enrollment by that date, the supply fee will be returned.

Tuition Assistance. Our Redeemer's Preschool does have a tuition assistance fund. If you find that you are unable to meet the cost of tuition for one or more months, please speak with the director.

Immunization Exemption Process If a vaccine-preventable, reportable disease is identified at Preschool the following procedure will be followed:

- The Director communicates with the Lewis and Clark Public Department (LCPH). LCPH will then manage the disease outbreak.
- LCPH determines those individuals who are deemed close contacts and notifies them of their risk as well as treatment options.
- Students who are considered close contacts and students without school-mandated immunizations may be excluded from school for up to 30 days for each potential exposure. (In the case of measles, they may be excluded for up to 21 days after each identified case.)
- Students who have been identified as close contacts may also be required to complete LCPH treatment recommendations or have a proof of a negative disease status before they are allowed to return to school.
- Students who have a conditional attendance form for immunizations may also be excluded from school if LCPH determines it is necessary. In addition, these students must adhere to the schedule for receiving the immunizations outlined on their conditional enrollment form or risk being excluded from school until the immunizations are up-to-date or another plan is completed.

Thank you for taking the time to review this handbook! Please do not hesitate to contact the Director with any questions or concerns.