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PARENT

HANDBOOK

WELCOME

Welcome Parents,

The staff of Greater Life Baptist Church and Academy/Preschool would like to welcome you and your child to our program. We expect the experiences here will be happy, wholesome ones. This handbook is designed to acquaint you with our program and its philosophy. The handbook should help you to understand our operating policies and procedures. Please read this book thoroughly. Your help is needed in making the most of your child’s experience here. If you have any questions about the information contained in the handbook, or matters not contained in the book, please feel free to contact me. We invite you to visit us at any time to ask questions and/or make suggestions. Thank you for entrusting your child to us and entrusting us to send home, with you, a happy child at the end of the day.

Sincerely,

Kristen Cairnes

Director

Who We Are

Mission Statement

The mission of Greater Life Baptist Church is to seek God with our whole heart and lift up Jesus in all that we do. It is our desire to love our community and encourage and equip all people to respond to the love of God and grace in their lives.

Purpose and Philosophy

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

As an integral part of Greater Life Baptist Church, Greater Life Preschool shall be considered an important ministry in helping the community provide quality education in a Christian environment to young children.

As a ministry of Greater Life Baptist Church, Greater Life Preschool will be a place of Christian nurture and will provide an educational program that is appropriate to the developmental needs of the children.

Organizational Structure

The Preschool of Greater Life Baptist Church is under authority of the church. Responsibility of administering the program is through the director, who in turn is under the direct authority of the governing body of the church.

How Children Learn

Goals for the Children

Each child is a unique individual and will be treated as such within our program. Learning is accomplished through a variety of structured and non-structured experiences. Our goal is to see that each child develops knowledge of his world with self-esteem and confidence. Physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of growth and development are encouraged

Physical Goals: To develop large muscle skills: to climb, run, walk up and down steps, to catch an object, to develop balance, to throw in an intended direction, to move with confidence, to respond to rhythms and music through running, skipping, hopping, and jumping. To develop small muscle skills: to gain eye-hand coordination, to complete a small muscle task (build with blocks), to pour without spilling, to develop self-help skills (putting on a jacket), to use senses to identify sounds, taste, sight, and hearing

Social Emotional Goals: To develop a sense of self-esteem, to demonstrate increasing independence, to develop a sense of fairness, to try new activities, to develop self-control, to begin to understand feelings and learn socially accepted ways of handling emotions, to learn to accept individual differences, to work cooperatively with others, to learn responsibility, to trust adults other than parent, to develop respect for adults and other figures of authority

Cognitive: To develop a positive attitude toward learning, to develop language and math pre-readiness skills through manipulative and daily experiences, to develop problem solving techniques, to ask questions, to recall logical sequences, series and patterns, to explore new things, to identify similarities and differences, to identify spatial relationships, to develop communication skills, to listen to stories and recall the events, to follow directions, to develop increasingly representational drawings, to participate in a group

Spiritual: To recognize that he/she is fearfully and wonderfully made by God, to learn the value of a family, to learn love for others through helping and sharing, to be exposed to the idea of thankfulness and blessings at meal or snack time, to hear simple Bible stories, to learn about God’s world, to learn about Jesus, to learn how to be a friend and that God is our friend, to begin to understand Christian values and ethics, not through a doctrine, but through daily modeling and discussion.

Curriculum

Our play-based curriculum is designed to meet the individual needs of each child. We draw from many sources to promote the preschool philosophy and purpose. Activities are designed to meet each child’s needs in a developmentally appropriate way. Our curriculum includes process art, cooking, science, nature, pre-reading and pre-math, problem solving, outdoor, and social learning. Our daily classroom curriculum is supplemented with music, chapel, and community resources that visit for onsite field trip experiences.

Children with Special Needs

We will make every effort to meet the needs of your child physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially within our abilities based on our staffing, ratio, and facility resources. We will work with families in making necessary plans to accommodate your child in our program. We look forward to working with you at every stage of your child’s development to ensure a warm, secure environment for your child to grow and learn.

Parent of children who require special diets, have allergies, need inhalers for asthma, have physical, emotional and social special needs should speak with the teacher and/or director at the beginning of the school year. According to the program standards, a care plan will need to be developed in order to best meet the needs of your child. Children receiving therapy who have an IEP should also share a copy of the plan with our staff so that goals can be implemented throughout the school day. See full Inclusion Policy of this Handbook. If at any time we believe it is in your child’s best interest to receive more specialized care, we will notify you and help you with alternatives.

Daily Routines

Snacks

Each class will have a snack mid-morning. This should be one item that is packed separately from their lunch box. (Example: Bag of goldfish packed in the front pocket of child’s backpack)

Lunches

Our children and teachers sit down together for lunch following a blessing. Meal times are prime times for social interaction and learning opportunities abound. We feel that our lunch period is a special time used for developing good manners, eating within a time frame, preparing for the school lunchroom experience in later years, developing food nutritional habits, and just having fun talking with our friends.

Lunch is a time for socializing, as well as eating. It’s also a learning experience! You can help us by packing a nutritional lunch in easy open containers that make it possible for your child to be independent with their lunch. Of course, we will assist them, but we encourage them to be as independent as possible as they prepare for Kindergarten classrooms where help may be more limited. Here are our suggestions for making lunchtime a positive experience for your child:

* Be sure to label your child’s lunch tote and all containers with your child’s name.
* Be sure to include utensils and straws if needed.
* Include an ice pack to keep food and drinks cold. We do not have space to refrigerate items.
* Pack a balanced lunch: protein, fruit, veggie, and a drink. Limit the carbs and sweets!
* Please cut and/or peel all foods if necessary for your child to eat.
* You can include a sweet treat, but only one and keep it simple. Remember, fruit snacks are a treat and not a fruit. The staff will encourage the children to eat their healthy items first and then the treat. Good habits begin early!
* Be aware of choking hazards!! Do NOT send popcorn, nuts, hot dogs, or grapes in lunches of toddlers and twos. In the threes and fours, hot dogs and grapes are permitted if cut lengthwise for safety. Lunch at preschool is different with a lot more distractions than home, so please eliminate any choking hazards.

Playground

Outdoor play is part of our daily routine, weather permitting. For safety, it is important that your child be dressed appropriately for outdoor play, including closed-toe shoes. (Sneakers are best.) Sandals do not provide secure footing for climbing and running on the playground and should not be worn at school.

Music, Show and Tell, and Chapel

All classes have a special music enrichment time in addition to classroom music activities. We will also have a weekly show and tell time for 3’s and 4’s.

Three and four-year-old children meet once per week for simple Bible stories, singing, and prayer.

Treasures from Home

Toys should be left at home unless they are requested for “show and tell” days. Children are possessive of personal toys and sharing becomes difficult. Security items such as blankets or pacifiers are welcome for toddlers (1 year olds) if necessary to help with the adjustment to school. Pacifiers are not allowed in the 2, 3, and 4 year old classes.

Clothing for School

Children should wear clothing that is comfortable and washable. Accidental stains due to art, food, playground dirt, etc. are inevitable. Rubber soled sturdy shoes are necessary for playground time. Flip flops, sandals, cowboy boots, or crocs may not be worn on the playground.

Toddlers need to bring at least 3 disposable diapers, wipes, and a change of clothing each day.

Preschoolers need to have a change of clothing in their bag each day in case of accidents. Please be sure all clothing is labeled in a Ziploc bag.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is very important time for children to gain independence. It is a time when children need to feel comfortable and assured that they can be independent within their environment. Our program is only 4 hours which does not allow enough time for complete toilet training while in our care. Toilet training requires 24 hours per day follow-through to master.

It is expected that children in the three-year-old classes be fully toilet trained. (Able to verbalize the need to potty) Of course, if there are special situations and we will work with the family as the process continues.

Guiding Children

It is our goal to help develop self-discipline and self-control in each child through positive guidelines and reinforcement. Social skills are stressed through teacher modeling and redirection in a positive manner. Time-out is used as a last resort.

Aggressive behavior will be brought to your attention. We will ask you to work with us to redirect such behavior so that all children can enjoy a safe and pleasant environment. Please inform us of extenuating circumstances in your child’s life which might affect behavior. We reserve the right to ask parents to remove a child from the program should behavior become extreme and all avenues to help have been exhausted and the director feels it is in the best interest of the child and the program.

North Carolina Law states that the parent must sign a statement that the center’s discipline policies were discussed. State law further states:

No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment by the owner/operator, director, or staff of any day care facility. For purposes of this rule, ‘staff’ shall mean any regular or substitute care-giver, any volunteer, and any auxiliary personnel, such as cooks, secretaries, janitors, maids, vehicle drivers, etc.

1. No child shall be handled roughly in any way, including shaking, pushing, shoving, pinching, slapping, biting, kicking, or spanking.
2. No child shall ever be disciplined for lapses in toilet training.
3. No child shall ever be disciplined for not sleeping during a rest period.
4. No child shall ever be disciplined for not eating or have his food withheld as a means of punishment.

Although state law does not apply to a church program operating 4 hours or less per day, we will abide by these policies. We know that busy and active children require less discipline. We plan an environment where children can be successful and feel good about themselves. As children mature, much patience and understanding are needed to help them learn how to interact in their world. Problem behaviors in preschoolers often are in the form of temper tantrums, negative behavior and aggression.

Biting

Biting is a common behavior in very young children. Small class sizes and well-planned activities in our program will keep children engaged and work to prevent instances of biting in young children. However, there may be instances where biting occurs. In such cases, the teachers will work with the biter to redirect behavior and appropriately respond to the bitten child. The parent of both the biter and the bitten will be contacted immediately while respecting the confidentiality of the situation. We will use the “shadowing” approach to try and prevent recurring biting incidents.

In repeat situations, the teachers will observe and document the biter’s behavior in order to identify what is triggering the child to bite other children. Teachers will request a conference with the parents in order to develop a plan of action to prevent the biting in the future. We reserve the right to request the withdrawal of a biting child after all attempts have been made with the teachers and parents to stop the behavior.

School to Family Communication

Our main form of communication with all parents is the Remind App/Texts. Please be sure you have a valid email address and phone number on file in the preschool office at all times. You will receive a monthly newsletter from your child’s teacher at the beginning of the month. The newsletter will outline all upcoming school-wide events that you need to mark on your calendar. Please read so that your child is appropriately prepared for all school activities.

Classroom Involvement

Saying Goodbye: Sometimes children have difficulty with prolonged goodbyes. This is especially true in the toddler and two-year-old classes. It is best to say a brief goodbye, assure your child that you will return after lunch, and turn your child over to the teacher.

Sharing Special Talents or Careers: We invite parents and other family members into the classroom to share talents, skills, or occupations, with our children. You may have community connections that we aren’t aware of but could enrich our learning environment. Please let us know!

Birthdays and Celebrations

Children’s birthdays will be celebrated during snack time. Store bought (Sealed in package) mini-cupcakes may be brought in for the class. Please notify the child’s teacher in advance.

Gift exchanges may not take place at school. Invitations can be distributed at school for outside parties if every child in the class receives one.

Safety First

Child Release Policy

To insure the safety of your child, your child will only be released to the persons you designate on the emergency card. Changes to the list of eligible people must be made in writing to the director or teacher. Persons new to picking up your child will be asked to show a picture ID to verify who they are. If arrangements have not been made appropriately for child release at pick-up, your child will be held at the school until you can be notified. Late charges may apply.

Parking Lot Safety

Please help us by following these rules at all times:

ALL drivers must enter the parking lot according to the signs at the entrance and exit.

The handicapped spaces must be honored as such at all times.

Always walk with your children in the parking lot.

Fire/Tornado Drills

Fire drills are conducted periodically to practice quick and effective evacuations in case of an emergency in the building. Tornado drills are practiced in the spring in case the need arises during severe weather season to evacuate the children from the classrooms.

Inclement Weather

We will share on the Remind App if school will close or dismiss early due to inclement weather.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Most parents are prompt at pick-up time, but occasionally a parent will arrive late repeatedly. It can be frightening for a child to watch all the other parents arrive but not his own. Out of concern for the children and our teachers who have other responsibilities after 1 PM, we feel that it is necessary to impose a late fee on parents unable to abide by our policy. Since unforeseen emergencies do arise, one grace day will be given to every family. Please notify the preschool if you are running late at pick-up so that we can prepare your child and let them know that you are on the way.

Late charges are as follows: $5 charge starts at 1 PM plus $1 for each additional 5 minutes. The purpose of this policy is not to gain income, but rather to encourage promptness for the sake of our children who are eager to see mom or dad return at the end of the day.

Health and Sanitation

Immunizations

All children entering the program must have documentation of current immunizations and a copy will be kept on file.

Medication

Due to the short amount of time that children are in our care, we WILL NOT administer any medications. Please let us know if your child is taking any type of medication as this may alter their demeanor or activity level.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, we will make every attempt to notify the parents, and then proceed with other emergency contacts that you have provided. Please make sure that all emergency contact numbers are kept up-to-date. Minor cuts, scrapes, and bruises will be treated with standard first aid.

Illnesses

Our staff reserve the right to refuse a child if he/she is ill or shows any signs of being ill while at school. When a child becomes ill at school, we will ask that you come pick your child up as soon as possible. We will keep them isolated from other children as much as possible until you arrive to pick them up. These are essential policies that help keep illness to a minimum in our program.

Symptoms that Require Exclusion:

Fever: Children can’t attend with a fever of 100 degrees or above. The child needs to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning.

Diarrhea: If a child has two loose bowel movements within an hour that is in the staff’s judgement to send the child home. The child must be free of diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

Vomiting: Parents will be notified to pick up a child that vomits at school or becomes nauseous. The child must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Colds: A child who come to school with a lingering cold should be able to follow the normal daily routine, including outside time. If the child is too sick to participate in all of the daily routines, the child should be kept at home. The staff reserves the right to make a call if the child is unable to be at school.

Communicable Diseases

If your child has a communicable disease, please let the school know so that other parents can be notified of exposure. A communicable disease is one that can be transmitted from one person to another directly by contact with bodily fluids or indirectly by sharing toys, etc. In case of serious illness, the staff may ask for a doctor’s note before the child is able to return.

Enrollment

Non-Discrimination Policy

Greater Life Baptist Church and Preschool admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to students.

Tuition

Your monthly tuition is due on the 1st of each month. Payments made after the 10th of the month, will incur a $20 late fee.

Please visit agreaterlife.net/glca and complete the auto-draft information or submit the Authorization Form for auto-draft payments. No other form of payment will be accepted.

Refunds will not be given for any reason. It is necessary to give a 30-day withdrawal notice if you are removing your child from the program.

COUPON FOR ONE LATE PICK-UP CHARGE

Please excuse the late fee for my child on the below date.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Family Name Date Redeemed