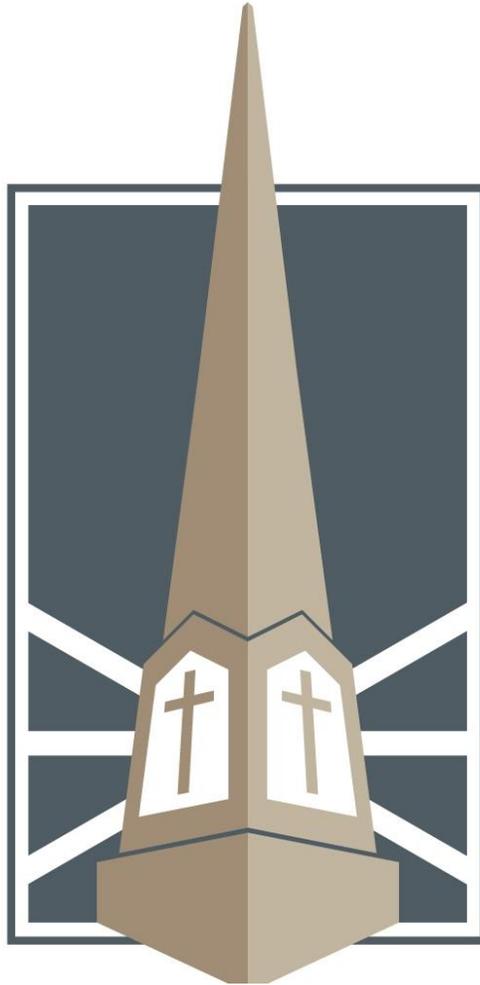


PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK



FOR
AMAZING GRACE
LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

2019-2020

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CHURCH AND PRESCHOOL:

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PRESCHOOL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Gary Griggs

Brenda Cook

Angela Santangelo

Pastor Benjamin Zahn (Advisory)

PASTOR:

Benjamin Zahn

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Welcome to Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool! It is a special privilege that you have entrusted us with the care and development of your child. We look forward to serving you and your child throughout this school year. Our handbook contains a great deal of information about our program. If you have other questions, feel free to ask any of our staff members.

Purpose and Philosophy

As an arm of the ministry of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, our preschool is operated and directed as a part of our ministry through the leadership of our church....

Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool exists to offer parents a partnership, as we work together to offer children a Christ-centered, quality education, in a safe and loving environment, by sharing the Word of God and a strong sense of Christian values with those in our community and beyond.

This includes:

- Children, who are nurtured in their spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development.
- Parents and families, who partner and are engaged with Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool to offer their children a Christ-centered, quality education.
- Teachers, who grow in faith from using their abilities and energy to encourage and inspire their students.
- Our church, privileged to operate and direct Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool as part of our ministry to preach and teach God's Word.

We work with children to assist them in their spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. We consider ourselves partners with the parents of our children. Our teaching is done from a Christian perspective. We share basic Bible truths and their application to daily living with the children through our core curriculum. We would like to lead the children to know and love their Lord Jesus and to make Him a part of their daily lives.

In this Christian atmosphere your children are seen as unique and special gifts from God and are treated with love and respect. They will be cared for in a gentle and loving way by our dedicated staff. We seek to impart timeless Christian morals, values and ethics to equip the students to face an ever-changing world. All of this is done in a stimulating environment conducive to learning.

Goals and Objectives

Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool provides opportunities...

For children

- to grow spiritually as they learn about Jesus.
- to learn to live their faith in their actions and attitudes at home and at school.
- to be prepared for a lifetime of learning through a proven curriculum emphasizing academic excellence.
- to develop physical dexterity, strength and coordination to their fullest potential.
- to learn social skills and how to thrive in a classroom environment.
- to make new friends and have fun!

For parents and families

- to partner with staff who care about their children.
- to be engaged in their child's education.
- to find a community of preschool families for support and friendship.

For preschool staff

- to grow personally, professionally and spiritually as they teach and nurture.
- to find joy in the progress their students make.
- to build relationships with preschool families.

Curriculum

THREE/FOUR YEAR-OLDS: Three/Four year-olds are making developmental strides and express a huge interest in the world around them. They learn by experiencing and by doing. During morning circle time, Bible story time, center exploration, investigation station, and language play, a lot of hands on instruction will be used to allow these children to “do” everything they can to learn. In our three/four-year old-class your child will use age appropriate social, emotional, and developmental skills to begin learning language arts, math concepts and social science skills. We use the Handwriting without Tears curriculum in the class. It is an excellent hands-ons handwriting curriculum that prepares them for writing letter and numbers correctly. You can find more information about the curriculum on their website www.hwtears.com/

Enrollment Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

Children ages 3 to 4 who are potty trained (this does not include the use of pull-ups) are eligible for entrance into Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool. Class assignment is based on the September 1st cut-off date used by the Horry County School System. All children of the proper age can attend our program regardless of sex, color, race, ethnic origin or religion. New families are enrolled on a first come first serve basis. If there is a waiting list in place, members of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church receive priority.

REQUIRED FORMS

- Registration Form (Ivory)
- Emergency Contact and Authorized Persons (Pink)
- Health Information Form (Yellow)
- Parental Agreement Form (Green)
- Permission to Photograph Form (Blue)

***Note: If there are any apparent medical conditions that would restrict participation in routine activities, the Medical Provider should state so in an attached statement. The Medical Providers signature or stamp is required!**

Continual updates of immunizations will be required while attending our preschool. The immunization form shall be returned to the parent upon request when the child leaves the school. Exemptions may be made if child has medical or religious reasons for refusing immunizations.

Learning or Physical Disabilities

Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool cannot meet the needs of all children, especially those with severe disabilities. If the staff cannot adequately meet the child's needs, we will suggest agencies through which parents can receive help.

Registration

The registration fee reserves your child's place in our program for a specific school year and is non-refundable. If your child is on the waiting and a space becomes available, you will be notified and have 24 hours to respond. If you have not done so, that space will go to the next individual on the waiting list. **A \$75 supply fee will be due at the beginning of the year.** It will be attached to the first month's tuition fee.

REGISTRATION FEE: \$100.00

Monthly Tuition

THREE/FOUR YEAR-OLD CLASS

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

\$225 per month

- The Brightwheel App is used for invoices and receipts. It is strongly recommended that parents download this free app onto their phones to view their monthly invoice. Brightwheel is also accessible on the web at <http://schools.mybrightwheel.com>, if you do not wish to download the app.
- Tuition is due the last Thursday of each month for the upcoming month, beginning in August with final payment due in April.
- A late fee of \$15 will be automatically imposed after a 5-day grace period.
- If not paid after a 5-day grace period, an additional \$15 will be assessed every 5 days until full payment is received.
- Parents will receive a 2nd notice if accounts are more than 2 weeks overdue.
- Parents will receive a follow up call from the chairman of the preschool executive committee if accounts are more than 3 weeks overdue.

- Accounts remaining delinquent for 4 weeks constitutes cause for expulsion from our school.
- A \$30 fee will be charged for all returned checks.
- Parental disenrollment of your child's enrollment in our school requires a 30 day written notice or one month's payment.

Insurance

Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool is covered with liability insurance in the amount required by the State of South Carolina.

Snacks

Snacks will be provided by Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool. Snacks will be planned with allergies in mind, but please note that the building is not a peanut free facility. All snacks will be communicated in a monthly newsletter and weekly emails. To promote good health the primary drink will be water.

Arrival/Departure

Our preschool doors open at 8:20 am.

It is imperative that your child not arrive at school before that time. Teachers and assistants need this time to complete preparations for the day's activities. Consequently, they cannot be responsible for children before this time.

Preschool class begins at 8:30 am. Lessons plans are written from 8:30 am to 11:30 am, and children arriving late, may need catching up on these materials. Children also need structure and routine, there are transitional activities built in throughout the day for this reason. Few children respond well to rushing to school and landing in the middle of an activity that is already taking place. We understand that there are occasions that your child may be late however we ask that this be a rare event.

Our regular preschool day finishes at 11:30 am. Pick up time must be strictly observed. Late pick-ups will cost \$2.00 for each minute after a five-minute grace period. This must be paid in cash at time of pick-up.

For your child's protection, please observe the following:

- Upon arrival, children are to be brought into the classroom by an adult
- The Brightwheel App is used for check in/check out. Each parent/guardian listed on the registration form is assigned a 4 digit code used to sign their child in and out. This code stands as your signature, so please use discretion with whom you share it. In the event someone else will be picking up your child, you will either need to share your code or create a new one for the individual picking up your child. It is recommended that if someone will be regularly picking up your child (such as a grandparent) that they have their own code. Please note that anyone picking up your child other than a parent/guardian should be prepared to present their driver's license. **For safety reasons, no one is allowed to pick up your child, unless listed on the registration form or named in a handwritten note from the parent/guardian prior to pick up—whether they know the code or not.**

- Doors will remain locked throughout the school day. If someone we have not met wishes to enter, we ask that he/she enter through the church entrance for security purposes.
- In case of emergencies, please talk to your child's teacher.

We want all parents to get to know each other. Feel free to visit in the great room outside your child's classroom.

Clothing

Each child must have a change of clothing to be left at the school. Please include underwear, socks, pants and shirt.

Please label each item of clothing with the child's name or three initials and place in labeled zip lock bag. You will be notified when it is time to change out these clothes for the season.

Please allow your child to wear clothing that he/she will not be afraid to get dirty. They will naturally avoid activities if they are worried about getting their "best" clothes dirty.

Keep in mind that crayons, markers and paints will be used frequently by your child. Even though we provide all 'washable' products, experience has taught us these do not always wash out completely.

The children will spend some time outdoors on a daily basis; please dress your child appropriately. For colder weather, be sure to remember mittens, hats, coats, boots, etc. Please label all of these items.

We do not allow open toed sandals or flip flops for footwear. This helps eliminate injuries while playing outside and encourages proper gross motor skills.

Communication

The Brightwheel App is used for daily communication with parents as well as picture sharing. It is strongly recommended that parents download this free app onto their phones to view their child's feed and see teacher's notes. Brightwheel is also accessible on the web at <http://schools.mybrightwheel.com>, if you do not wish to download the app. All billing invoices and receipts will be posted to your Brightwheel account.

If you have a question, suggestion or concern, please bring it to the attention of the classroom teacher if it involves her class. If you feel the matter has not been resolved, please speak to the Preschool Executive Committee Chairman.

If we are not available to answer the school phone, please leave a message on the answering machine, and we will get back to you as soon as we can. We will check the machine every thirty minutes while the children are present.

Discipline

Discipline is derived from the word disciple meaning, “to teach.” Therefore at Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool we do not think of discipline as punishment, but rather as teaching self-control and Christian attitudes. Teachers will deal with each child in accordance with the teachings of Christ. *In no instance will physical punishment be used.* We prefer to give encouragement and praise of good behavior.

We will try to anticipate the problems and redirect children’s activities. We will narrow choices if necessary. Positive words will be used to encourage positive behavior. We will encourage children to use words to express themselves.

If the child is exhibiting an inappropriate behavior, we will tell the child that they need to stop, explain why the behavior is unacceptable and offer reasonable alternatives.

If the child is repeating inappropriate behavior, we use methods to help the child self-regulate their behavior such as quiet reflection or time out. If the behavior persists, the parents will be consulted. The child may possibly be suspended for a period of time at the executive committee’s discretion. If the poor behavior persists, the child will be dismissed from the program at the discretion of the Preschool Executive Committee.

Disenrollment Policy

Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool is centered on the children for whom we care. We seek to provide lessons designed to support children’s growth and faith. We will challenge them as individuals with unique learning styles and ways of responding to the world. Given the diversity of the families and communities that we serve, it is incumbent upon us to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family brings to our program. Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool seeks a solid partnership with our families as a basis for their children’s success within our program. We will do everything possible to work with you to avoid a child’s disenrollment from the preschool. The following are reasons we would have to disenroll a child or family from the preschool:

CHILD’S ACTIONS:

- Child unable to adjust to the program after a reasonable amount of time
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Ongoing uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Excessive biting

PARENTAL ACTIONS:

- A parent/guardian fails to abide by the preschool’s policies.
- Non-payment of tuition
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and cannot reasonably be delivered by the program.

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR DISENROLLMENT:

- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive or intimidating to the preschool’s staff, children, or anyone else at the preschool.
- Potentially dangerous behavior by a parent or child

WORKING TOWARDS A POSITIVE SOLUTION

The decision to disenroll a child from Amazing Grace Lutheran Preschool is a difficult one for both the preschool and the family. In all cases, Amazing Grace Lutheran's goal is to act quickly, thoughtfully, and thoroughly to communicate, address, and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. Preschool personnel will attempt to work with a family to take constructive steps to finding a solution that resolves the problem(s), before a disenrollment occurs. When a child's teacher has concerns about a child's behavior or other circumstances, he or she will document such concerns as soon as they arise. The preschool will inform and involve the child's parent/guardian by notes, phone calls, and meetings, as necessary, to establish a collaborative environment.

DISENROLLMENT PROCESS

If the behavior has not resolved after all remedial actions have been exhausted, a conference will be held with the child's parent/guardian to communicate the preschool's decision to disenroll. A follow-up letter will be provided which will include, if applicable:

- the reasons for the disenrollment or suspension
- the date of the disenrollment or length of the suspension, which affords the parent sufficient time to seek alternative care, (up to two weeks, depending on safety risks presented)
- the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return or to resume or continue enrollment at the preschool

If the preschool elects to disenroll a child, the preschool will maintain on file a record of the circumstances, parental notification, and corrective action taken.

Medical Information

No medication will be given to your child, but in the event of minor scrapes and abrasions the caregiver will administer first aid by cleansing and covering with a band-aid or gauze and tape as appropriate. All accidents, regardless of the nature, will be recorded on an Accident Report which needs to be signed prior to the child's dismissal. Parents will be contacted immediately if it appears that an accident or illness requires medical attention. In a life-threatening emergency, 911 will be called for help and ambulance transportation. One staff member will accompany the child, taking with them the Emergency Authorization form so that medical personnel may begin treatment before the parent's arrival. The child's parents will be called to meet the ambulance at the hospital. Cost will be the responsibility of the parents.

Parents are requested to inform the school when a child will be absent, but particularly in the case of illness, especially if it is contagious. When advisable, a release form from the physician will be necessary for a child to re-enter the program. Parents will be advised of any communicable diseases to which the children may have been exposed.

You will be notified if your child shows any of the following symptoms: listlessness, nausea, runny nose, sore throat, flushed appearance, abnormally irritable, rash, watery inflamed eyes, fever, diarrhea or vomiting. When appropriate you will be expected to pick up your child as soon as possible. Our policy states that we are required to remove the child from the rest of the class when sick, we ask that you are able to pick up your child no later than 45 minutes of receiving a call.

You are asked not to send your child to school with the following: rash, watery or inflamed eyes, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. If your child arrives at school, or develops these symptoms

while at school, you will be asked to take them home as soon as possible. **Please do not return your child to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.**

Please notify the preschool staff if medication has been given prior to arrival; therefore we will not dispense any medication in the preschool.

We are unable to keep children safe that have a reaction to topical contact with peanuts, products made with peanut derivatives or items manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts.

We do not have the staff to stay inside with one child. If a child has been ill, he/she should not return to the program until able to participate in all of our activities.

Animals

On occasion, animals may be brought into the program for exhibit. If your child has animal allergies, please ensure you have noted this on the Health Information Form.

Items from Home

Items are not to be brought to school by children unless requested by the teacher for show and tell. Teachers and assistants may use discretion and put away any items brought until the close of the day. Please use discretion when selecting items for show and tell. Each class will provide a show and tell schedule.

School Calendar

We follow the Horry County school calendar with minor changes. The school calendar can be found at www.amazinggracelutheran.com

School Closings and Emergency Procedures

Procedures for fires and tornados are posted in each classroom. In addition, we will conduct monthly fire drills and regular tornado drills during the appropriate seasons. We have a weather alert radio in the school to alert us of emergencies.

We will be closed anytime Horry County schools are closed or delayed more than an hour due to bad weather. If delayed an hour, class will begin at 9:30 AM. No refunds will be given for missed days due to weather.

General Information

If you would like to discuss anything with your teacher, please send her a note or call her to set up a time to meet with you. This ensures you have her full attention and you can talk without “little ears” listening.

It is very normal for a child to feel distressed when he/she is separated from the parent. Crying is a very normal reaction for most children at some time or another. A quick exit after settling the child in his room is the best remedy. You are welcome to wait in our gathering area until you are reassured that your child has calmed down.

Each child will need a backpack that will be used to send items back and forth between home and school. Please check your child’s supplied folder each day. This way your child’s teacher can send home the wonderful work that your child creates. Backpacks will be checked each morning, please assure that backpacks do not include medications, sunscreens or hand sanitizers. Information will be sent home by electronic communication.

Make sure that you have given us all of the phone numbers (cell phone, home, office etc.) where we can reach you. Also add our preschool phone number in your cell phone to reach us- (843) 236-9134.

Since we will be outside for part of the day, we ask that you apply sunscreen prior to your child’s arrival. Due to time restraints, we will not be applying it during school hours.

If you have any questions or concerns about anything involving your child or the school, please feel free to contact the lead teacher at anytime at 843-236-9134.