



Emergent Play | Dual Language

731 Peachtree Street NE | Atlanta, GA 30308
404.600.4321 | www.MidtownLutheranPreschool.org

Family Handbook:

General Information, Policies, & Procedures

2024-2025

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Overview

Mission

Midtown Lutheran Preschool nurtures and educates children in a Christian setting to be wholehearted, compassionate, principled individuals who contribute positively to the world community.

Core Values

Our program strives to create a loving faith and educational community and support system for the whole family unit through developmentally appropriate best practices looking at all developmental areas of the child.

Our philosophy is driven by the beliefs and values that children:

- are curious, have an innate desire to learn, and can problem solve.
- are individuals who have an impact on, and are affected by, their environment.
- are whole beings made by God of mind, body, and spirit.

Governance & Oversight

Midtown Lutheran Preschool fulfills its mission in collaboration with the Redeemer Preschool Ministry Team. Ministry teams are governed by the council of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. The MTLPS director is a staff person of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer and reports to, and is evaluated by, the Senior Pastor of the church.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

Enrollment at Midtown Lutheran Preschool is open to families regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, or family structure in administration of its educational policies and other organization-administered programs.

Family Responsibility

By signing the preschool family contract submitted annually (in the preschool forms packet) at the start of the academic year, families agree to be familiar with, and abide by, the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook. You may inquire at any time for clarification or details from the director.

Handbook Subject to Changes

The MTLPS Handbook is a living document and subject to change. Families will be Notified when changes occur and agree to knowledge of potential change and changes when signing the annual preschool contract. If a family has questions or concerns regarding Handbook changes, they may contact the director for inquiry.

Contact Information

Midtown Lutheran Preschool

- Preschool office 404-600-4321
- Director mobile 678-600-9998
- Preschool email preschool@redeemer.org
- Preschool website www.midtownlutheranpreschool.org
- Multiage Oaks email oaksprek@mtlps.org
- Young Preschool Saplings email saplings@mtlps.org
- Toddler Acorns email acorns@mtlps.org

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

- Website www.redeemer.org
- Main line 404-874-8664

2020-2021 MTLPS Staff

Director	Kisha Johnson
Multiage – 3s & 4s	Claudia Schalko – German/General Ed. Diamond Thompson –English/Assistant
Young Preschool – 2s	Tami Patterson –General Ed. Barbara Smith – German/Assistant
Toddlers – 1s	Ayobami Adenuga –German/General Ed. Jemeice Pickett - General Ed.

Redeemer Staff – Supporting Preschool Initiatives

Security Lead	Stacey Williams
Senior Pastor	Pastor Mark Larson
Pastor for Evangelism and Outreach	Pastor Ron Bonner
Pastor for Member Care	Pastor Jenny McLellan
Pastor for Faith Formation	Pastor Jonathan Trapp
Director of Children and Family Ministries	Deacon Mary Houck
Facilities and Property	Seth Brown



Program Policies & Procedures

Program & Curriculum

- We offer an emergent, play-based and playful curriculum. Themes and lessons are taught based on natural cycles of the school year and current events and happenings as well creating units based on the interests of the children. We value time outdoors. We offer dual-language classrooms.
- Students are placed in a classroom for the FULL academic year based on their age as of September 1st.

Discipline & Guidance

MTLPS strives to use guided and peaceful methods of discipline. We use redirection and discussion as a way to guide children's learning of appropriate social behavior. We will never use corporal punishment and avoid punitive discipline (time out chairs, etc.).

School Year and Calendar

We are an academic year program running mid-August through mid-May. Our calendar generally follows Atlanta Public Schools (APS) in our vacations and holidays. However, depending on the year, we may have unique exceptions for professional development days, religious holidays, etc. Holidays and special dates are communicated via email in newsletters. Days out of session can also be viewed in the schedule area of MyProcare.com

- For weather related cancellations we will follow the call of APS and/or our church building closings.

Weather Policy

As we generally operate under the calendar of APS, we also follow their inclement weather cancellations. There may be other times we will need to close off of APS depending on the church building closures, ability of our staff to be at school, etc. Considerations may also made to come in if communicated through our online calendar. Communication will be made via email or text messaging. We strongly suggest families sign up for school closure alerts and assume cancelations unless you hear otherwise from us.

Hours

MTLPS opens for students at 9:00 AM. Parents arriving earlier must remain with their until teachers open classroom doors. All programming ends by 12:50 PM and students must be picked up (ie. in parent/guardian care) no later than 1 PM. We are limited strictly to a 4-hour day and cannot offer before and after care due to our exempt status with DECAL.

Parking

- **Drop off and Pickup Parking Expectations:** Families are required to park IN a designated parking space and enter the building to drop off and pick up children.
 - DO NOT park alongside the sidewalk near the reception door, in a crosswalk, in a fire lane, in the middle of the side driveway, in a coned space, or double park behind parked cars.
 - If your family has a specific need (eg. physical limitation, etc.) for closer parking, this must be discussed with the director and church security and we will find a parking solution.
- Lutheran Church of the Redeemer has free available property parking behind the main building and behind the playground/mission house area.
- Our 4th street lot is now a PAID lot. ALL street parking is city-monitored and must be paid for at a kiosk or you risk ticketing, booting, or towing.

Arrival

- Drop-off: 9:00-9:10AM. Doors to rooms open at 9 AM sharp. We do not offer care prior to 9 AM. We ask that you do your best to arrive within the 9-9:10 AM timeframe so your child has sufficient time to settle into class for the day and work on activities that may be unique to the mornings.
- Instruction starts by 9:20 AM. Families arriving late prolong the start of the day. We request parents be cognizant of classroom routine and help your child to quickly enter and settle into the classroom if you arrive past 9:15. We understand, and embrace, family good-byes but request you keep these a reasonable length and that longer routines are taken care of in the hallway outside the classroom.
- If you anticipate arrival after 9:20 AM, families must email classroom teachers. If you arrive without notifying us of your tardiness, we ask you to bring your child, and his/her belongings, to the director's office to be escorted to the classroom. Unless previously scheduled, or with sufficient notification, we will not allow late arrivals to class unannounced after 10 AM.

Dismissal

- Our school programming ends at 12:50 PM. Pick-up must be completed by 1 PM. A late fee will accrue in the rate of \$1/minute beginning after 1 PM for late pick-ups. Once you have checked your child out of the classroom, you are responsible for the supervision of him/her.
- Child supervision - as we are part of a larger organization, we ask that you make sure your child stays close to you and refrains from running through the building or in the parking lot. Please be aware of your child's location and safety. Be sure your child is with you when approaching the exit door near the receptionist desk as this door has a sensor and opens easily for little ones. Families are welcome to socialize on the playground after school dismisses. If families need space to

socialize within the church building, the director must be contacted and a formal request made to the Facilities Director of LCR.

Early Dismissal

Early dismissals must be checked in with desk administrator and director. It is easiest if we are made aware of early dismissals prior to the time a parent shows up for pickup – in the morning, a last minute text, etc. However, we understand that emergencies arrive where you cannot inform us in ample time.

Procedure:

- Arrive and notify receptionist of an early preschool dismissal. Give her/him the name of your child(ren). Those picking up are *not* to pass and go directly to the room.
- Receptionist notifies director or teacher.
- Director or teacher will bring child with belongings to the door unless otherwise directed.

Visitors

We welcome visitors but request notification if families and friends choose to visit us so we can best coordinate with classroom day. Visitors are those staying beyond drop off, arriving early for pickup, dropping in during the day, etc. This does not include large family events.

Procedure:

- Discuss with teacher to coordinate.
Upon arrival:
- Sign in with the receptionist
- Receptionist will alert director who will give visitor a badge to wear then escort the visitor to the appropriate classroom or activity.
- *OR* after direction of the director, acquire a visitor badge, then be escorted by the receptionist or security to the appropriate classroom.

Volunteering

We welcome those who wish to volunteer but ask that this is done in collaboration with the teachers and director to best coordinate use of time and talents in the classrooms and at events. Sometimes Room Parents will coordinate volunteer opportunities.



Child and Family Policies

Health

- Sick Policy: children who have had a fever, diarrhea, or have vomited may not attend or return to school until all symptoms have subsided without the use of medication for 24 hours.

We reserve the right to

- Extend the 24-hour requirement to a longer period of time depending on the child's illness or exposure to an illness
 - require a doctor's note at any time for a child to return to school
 - to send them home at our own discretion based on signs of illness or not acting "themselves"
- In cases where a child gets sick during the school day, parents will be texted and/or called to come pick up their child. Texts will be followed up with a phone call if not responded to within 10 minutes. After this, emergency contacts will be called.
 - In the event where there is a reportable contagious illness at the school, we will communicate information on the illness via email to families.
 - We require that all students are up to date on current immunizations. This will be checked by director and records will be printed for files. See the director if your child has a medical exemption to vaccinations.
 - We expect multiage-class children (age 3+) to be fully toilet learned/trained and mostly accident free before the start of the school year.
Exceptions may be made for medical and developmental delays. In this circumstance, families must alert the director at time of enrollment so we can determine if accommodations are able to be fulfilled in our program. Families must submit a note of medical exemption and diagnosis from your child's physician, and meet with staff to come up with a toileting plan 2+ weeks BEFORE your child starts school.

Medications

- Families must have signed the over-the-counter medications release for staff to apply topical medications such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream or 1st aid ointments – even if verbal permission is stated.
- For emergency allergy, prescription, or other over-the-counter medications, a family must submit a signed doctor's medication plan and see the director for forms and to make necessary medical plans. These plans should be for urgent medication uses only.
- Medication that is dosed (eg. seasonal allergy, cough, antibiotics, etc.) must be administered at home before and/or after school.

Clothing

- It is the family's responsibility to make sure each student is dressed appropriately for the day – consider the weather, appropriate footwear, etc. Children should wear comfortable clothing with closed-toed shoes or socks with open-toed sandals. Flip flops are NOT permitted except for water day play.
- Please make sure that clothing and shoes are kid-friendly and teacher-time friendly. This helps us as we diaper and assist in toilet learning and because we expect children age-appropriately to dress, shoe, and toilet themselves. Examples of appropriate clothing: pull up/elastic waist bands, two-piece outfits or dresses, Velcro or slip-on shoes (no flip flops)
Things to avoid: tight buttons or snaps, laced shoes, complicated outfits, things that can't get dirty or messy
- Be sure to send children in clothing that can get messy and dirty – not family photo "best."
- Label ALL of your child's belongings. You can do this with a Sharpie or by ordering labels online.
- Additionally, we ask that at all times your child has a FULL extra change of clothes and undergarments (or two) at school in the cubby or backpack.
- If your child is still diapered, please keep a stash of diapers at school. Teachers will inform you when you need to replenish.

Food

- Children must bring a water bottle, or sippy cup with water, (preferably one that does not leak) every day they attend preschool.
 - You may send in milk *in addition to* the water bottle. We ask you refrain from sending in juice or diluted juice.
- Families are responsible for their child(ren)'s snack and lunch each day. If your child needs warmed food, we recommend families purchase a thermos as teachers cannot heat food for students (for time and safety reasons). Please use cold packs in lunchboxes if the lunch needs to stay cold.
- Please send balanced and healthy choices and choose familiar foods you know your child will eat.

Birthdays

- Birthday celebrations are to be coordinated with child's teacher with sufficient time (preferably at least a week in advance) so staff can plan timeframe and communicate dietary needs and considerations of classmates.
- If a birthday is on a non-school day, we typically celebrate *after* the birthday (rather than before). Again, discuss with classroom teachers.
- Please limit treats to one item type (cake *or* popsicles) and we encourage families to lean towards a healthier option when possible (eg. muffins vs.

cupcakes). Families can drop birthday treats off the day prior or morning of celebration.

- Be mindful that this is not a time for a birthday party but a time for classes to acknowledge your child's special day and celebrate with teachers and classmates. Please no decorations, goodie bags, party gifts, etc.
- We will distribute off-site party invitations as long as all children in a class are invited. Otherwise, families are expected to make connections amongst themselves to get personal information for invites.

Absences

- We **do not** offer make-ups for sick or vacation/travel days. If you are interested in additional daily drop-ins for a fee (\$54/day), please see the director and teacher for availability of space.
- **Absence communication**
 - **Planned travel, vacations, etc: we request families inform teachers ahead of time of absences in person or email**
 - **Last minute due to illness, family emergency, etc: email (or text) teachers.**
- If a child is absent from MTLPS for 10 consecutive school days without communication, or tuition payment, they will be assumed withdrawn from the school and family must reapply for enrollment. All fees and tuition are forfeited to the school.

Travel and Vacation

We understand the great value of travel for families. However, we rely on family commitment of tuition for financial functioning. Therefore, tuition will not be prorated or exempted for trips during the school year. Families will be expected to continue tuition payments through absences to hold a child's seat. Families that refrain from tuition payments forfeit their child's seat immediately and are considered withdrawn and must re-enroll upon return.

Pandemic Policies

- Health: COVID-19 protocol will follow CDC guidance and recommendations around masking, isolating, classroom quarantining, etc.
- Finances: Tuition reimbursement and/or will only be considered if there is a shut-down longer than 4 weeks.



Other Information

Communication

- Our teachers and administration communicate primarily through email, face-to-face, Brightwheel, and in urgent matters via text messaging.
- **Brightwheel**
Software is an investment for your child's early education experience.
Families are REQUIRED to download the Brightwheel app onto their mobile devices and have the ability to access online.
 - **Iphone app** <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/brightwheel-child-care-app/id902823296>
 - **Google play/Android**
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=co.kidcasa.app>
- We expect families to take time to consistently check email to watch for important newsletters and information and have the Brightwheel app on mobile devices for urgent notifications. *Please save and search newsletters if you have general questions regarding school before emailing staff. * Newsletters will also be posted in Educa for easy reference.
- Director newsletters are emailed Thursdays of each week and contain information on community happenings, reminders, updates, child development information, and important calendar dates.
- Additionally, we post on social media so interacting with us on Facebook is also helpful for your information and for our online presence.
- We offer texting services for urgent messaging alerts from the school. Please be sure to keep all family information up to date and inform the teacher or director immediately if there are any contact changes (ie. new email, new address, phone number changes, etc.)
- The director has given a mobile number for urgent matters during the school day and office hours only. Please be considerate when using the mobile number off hours. If an issue is not urgent, email or speak/call in person the following school day. Please also identify yourself when texting as parent numbers are not saved.
- Contact information: it is the responsibility of the family to make sure all information the preschool has is current and alert the director and teachers of contact information changes (eg. address, phone, email, etc.).
- Health and Medical current or changes: it is the responsibility of the family to alert the director and teachers if a child has a medical or health condition, or has one arise, that affects, or could potentially affect, him/her at school (allergies, asthma, toileting issues, behavioral, etc.).
- Home environment changes: we request families be in communication with the teachers if there are changes in your home no matter how small so we can

support your child and you. If changes have legal ramifications, you must contact and discuss with director immediately.

- When needing information regarding your child, the classroom, or the preschool in general, we encourage you to consider the chain of command:
 1. *General inquiry*: search email newsletters.
 2. *Regarding your child or the classroom*: discuss/inquire with the classroom teachers. Set up a conference time
 3. *If an issue or question isn't resolved, or is above the teacher's realm of duty, or a general preschool question not answered in emails*: contact the director.
 4. *Larger organizational concern*: Redeemer's Pastor for Faith Formation and Senior Pastor of Redeemer are the supervisors of the director and to our program.
- **Gossip** is strictly prohibited. Caretakers and staff are committed to not start or engage in gossip about a child, families, or staff. If there are issues or complaints, those need to be handled directly with others or reported to the director of the school. If a family engages in damaging gossip, the school holds the right to dismiss them from enrollment.

Babysitting

MTLPS requires a release for any families and staff that engage in a babysitting/nanny arrangement outside of school hours with staff they met through MTLPS. This does not apply to relationships established outside of MTLPS.

Families and staff can access the release form here:

<https://form.jotform.com/231945298397069>

Additionally, any families and staff engaging in a childcare exchange outside of school must NOT work/hire during school calendar days and hours.

Student Adjustment

- We work hard, and do our best, to accommodate the needs of each child and family during the adjustment-to-school period. We strive for this experience to be fun and enjoyable.
- Beginning of school: we welcome parents to stay a few minutes the first couple drop-offs and then we ask you to transition to quick good-byes. Our parental anxieties are often the issue transferring onto our children at the start of school.
- We feel children should show signs of adjustment within one month of school starting. If at this time your child does not show any signs of adjustment, we will convene to evaluate the situation and strategies. If adjustment issues are extreme, a family may be asked to withdraw from the program.
- **1 Year Olds**: we will start our 1-year-old program, and any new enrollees in the 1s age group, as follows (subject to change as a group or individual basis):

2-hour blocks for 3 sessions, 3-hour blocks for 2 sessions, then we will move children to the full 4 hour per day schedule. More detailed information will be sent to caretakers of this age-group prior to their start of school.

Child Development

- Families are strongly encouraged to participate in fall conferences for updates on their child(ren)'s start to the preschool year.
- Families will receive an in-depth developmental assessment at the end of the academic year which includes a checklist and observation narrative.
- It is our ethical duty as a preschool to work with families over all aspects of their child's development. We see your child in a frequency usually second to you and we take our educational responsibilities very seriously. We strive to create an environment where your child will flourish into his/her best young self which means we are committed to discussing concerns with you when we observe development and/or behavior that we feel is off the typical trajectory of child growth and development. If families ever have questions or concerns from your point of view, please come to us as we can give you feedback from our observations and guidance to next steps. NAEYC Code of Ethics Sect. III, P-2.15: *We shall be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources and professional support services. After a referral has been made, we shall follow up to ensure that services have been appropriately provided.*
<https://tinyurl.com/ydyd4rva>
- There may be times where our school does not have the resources (experience, education, training, etc.) to accommodate children with special needs. We will do our best to work with families that have children with developmental and behavior concerns. However, as school there are times where we, with the family, may need to decide that a different school environment would be more appropriate for a child and a family will be released from the preschool contract. See details under "Program Termination."

Child Protection

- All staff of MTLPS and Lutheran Church of the Redeemer are regularly background checked
- Staff regularly goes through child protection and mandated reporting.
- Georgia Law OCGA 19-7-5(c)(1) states that certain professionals, including those taking care of children, are mandated reporters of abuse and neglect. If we have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused, we must make a report immediately to the Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS) office, or law enforcement, and we are subject to criminal penalty for failing to do so. Please inquire with the director for any questions regarding our procedures around this policy.

Enrollment Termination

Enrollment will be considered terminated under the following circumstances:

- The Center receives a 30-day advance written notice of withdrawal. Although our expectation is that families are committed to a full school year of attendance, we understand that extenuating situations may arise where you will need to withdraw your child from MTLPS. A 30-day written notice is required to get a refund on any remaining tuition that might be due AFTER stated 30 days.
- A family fails to comply with the Parent Handbook, or any other rules, of MTLPS or Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. We reserve the right to terminate service to a family.
- Children who are absent for 10 consecutive days of school without family communication to the teachers or director.
- A family threatens, is belligerent to, etc. staff of MTLPS or LCR.
- Failure to comply with tuition payments per agreements and contracts of MTLPS.
- The center, in its sole discretion, determines it is unable to meet the needs of the child or family, or that it is not in the best interest of the center or other children enrolled to have the child discontinue attendance. However, there are several measures that will be taken before dismissal occurs:
 1. Staff will document behavior.
 2. The director, parents/guardians, and teachers will meet to discuss any concerns and a plan will be created and agreed to by staff and parents/guardians (behavior consultants may be used to support the staff).
 3. Staff and parents/guardians will have frequent communication to evaluate the success of the behavior plan.
 4. When the efforts to bring about change have been exhausted, parents/guardians and the director will meet to determine the next course of action.
- The Center and its staff reserve the right to determine any disputed factual matters regarding termination of enrollment.



Tuition & Fees Procedures

Fees & Deposits

ALL fees and deposits are non-refundable.

- *Fees:* MTLPS requires a one-time \$100 registration admin fee upon enrollment.
- *Deposits:* Class placement is confirmed after receipt of deposit which is 10% of tuition.

Tuition

MTLPS is a non-profit, self-supporting private preschool. All fees and tuition are used to provide teacher/staff salary, curriculum, and resources. Enrollment is a commitment. tuition is not optional, not negotiable*, and not based on attendance or completion of the school year.

All tuition payments will be expected on time and will not be refunded, put on hold, or Prorated for illness or travel (including extended trips).

See complete tuition agreement at the end of the handbook below.

**If your family is in need of financial assistance, please contact preschool director.*

*Needs based tuition support information is available upon request.**

- **Annual tuition for Midtown Lutheran Preschool is as follows*, with no deductions, or make-up days, for absences due to sickness, travel/vacations, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our anticipation and control.** We depend upon tuition and fees for the financial stability of our school. Tuition is an *annual* commitment. By signing the tuition agreement in the intake forms packet, you are responsible for the full tuition amount as follows unless otherwise specified or approved by director:

2023-2024 - Days/Week and Annual August-May Tuition Total:

***2 - \$3,811 *3 - \$4,987 *4 - \$6,174 *5 - \$7,297**

Continued on next page
Payment Schedule

When	What
Registration	\$100 one-time fee – Non-refundable
Prior to academic year or at time of enrollment	Deposit - 10% of tuition - Non-Refundable
By first day of school One of the following:	*Tuition payments DUE via Brightwheel -Full annual tuition balance due for yearly payers -First of 3 payments of balance for three payment payers -Monthly tuition – payment 1 of 9
5 th of the month November and February	Tuition due for 3 equal payment payers.
5 th of the month September through April	Monthly tuition DUE
May 1st	Re-Enrollment Deposit for 2022-2023

- Tuition Payment type summaries:
 - In full
 - 10% of tuition as deposit – non-refundable
 - Balance in full due August
 - 3 Payment
 - 10% of tuition as deposit – non-refundable
 - Balance paid 3 equal parts August, November, February
 - Monthly
 - 10% of tuition as deposit – non-refundable
 - Balance paid monthly August-April
 - August payment non-refundable
- Tuition is posted the first school day of the month and due by the 5th. Director will send out reminders for unpaid tuition on the 10th of the month. If payment is not remitted by the 15th, an invoice will be sent with a \$25 incurred late fee.
- MTLPS reserves the right to terminate a family due to past-due tuition, failure to comply with agreements, failure to comply with procedures and policies.
- Families can download ledger records on MyProcure.com for tax and FSA purposes. If a family needs the preschool director for invoices, tax records, or FSA receipts, we require a minimum of 3 business days for requests to be fulfilled. Please plan accordingly.
- We reserve the right to raise tuition and/or add fees at any time with a 30-day notification to families.
- **Needs based tuition support information is available upon request.*

Withdrawals:

- **Notice is REQUIRED 30 days in advance.** Only tuition credited to later than 30 days will be refunded.
- 10% tuition/enrollment/re-enrollment deposits are non-refundable. Registration fee of \$75 is non-refundable.
- Monthly tuition paid is non-refundable and following-month tuition will not be prorated for student withdrawals. Additionally, if a student withdraws with less than 30 days notice, MTLPS reserves the right to charge for the next month's services and not refund any pre-paid tuition for the following month.

- Paid-in-full or 3-equal-payments require a 30-day notice for withdrawal from the school for refunds. Paid tuition for the month of withdrawal, or the following month if notice is filed mid-month, will NOT be refunded.
- Any child who withdraws and returns will be a “new” student and must re-enroll.
- School will consider a student withdrawn if there is a lack of communication/contact, or tuition payment, for 10 consecutive school days.