



Michigan State License Number DC110289390

Handbook

Let's Grow Together

Our Mission Statement:

Grace Christian School Preschool exists to provide a Christ-centered environment of discovery and learning for preschoolers. Students are unique, precious individual creations of God, each with gifts, talents, interests, and needs. The Preschool staff seeks to lay the foundation that encourages each student to become a follower of Christ as well as develop a lifelong love for learning.



Dear Parents,

We are honored that you have chosen Grace Christian School Preschool for your student's early learning experience. We recognize the importance of this time in a student's life and know each student has individual needs. We believe that each student's life can be enriched through guided learning experiences with caring teachers and interaction with other students in an atmosphere of Christian love. It is our desire to provide a supportive and loving environment that will nurture your student's cognitive, spiritual, physical, and social growth. It is our goal to provide opportunities for your student to grow and learn through play and basic early childhood experiences.

We want to build a mutually beneficial relationship between our program and your family. This handbook has been prepared to inform you about our policies and procedures. As you read this handbook, please come to us if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about your student's experience in our program. We know that by working together we can give your student a solid foundation on which to build in the coming years.

We look forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

Beth Corwin, Director

Grace Christian School Preschool Directory

Grace Christian School
325 N M 140
Watervliet, MI 49098

Phone: (269) 463-5545

Principal – Leslie Colford

Preschool Director – Beth Corwin

Teachers- Liz Hemingway, Julie Newell, & Ally Wilson

Business Office –Chris Leach & Sheri Bromley

Main Office – Chrystal Romeo

Hours of Operation, Fees and Tuition

Grace Christian School Preschool:

3 & 4 yr. old's

Full Time	8:00-2:30	M - F	\$5,500 yearly
Part Time options:	½ day (8-11:30) or M/W/F or T/TH		\$3,500 yearly

*Part time positions are limited.

Drop off is 7:30-8:30, Pick up is 2:30-3:30

Note: See Grace Christian School Calendar at the end of this Handbook for dates of events and days off. Grace Christian Preschool follows the GCS Calendar for holidays, teacher in service days, special events and snow days. **Please check the school calendar for days we are not in session.**

Extended Care:

Before School Care	M - F	7:00-7:30 am
After School Care	M - F	3:30-5:30 pm

Early care costs \$6 per day or \$90 per month (when paid in advance).*

Aftercare costs \$6 an hour or \$180 per month (when paid in advance).*

Aftercare begins at 3:15 PM. Students not picked up from the school by 3:15 PM will be signed into aftercare and a charge of \$6 will be applied. \$6 will be charged at the beginning of every new hour (4:31 would be \$12).

*Payments are to be prepaid by the first of the month. If your account has not been prepaid, your aftercare will default to an hourly rate for the month.

Pickup after 5:30 PM will be charged \$10.00 per quarter hour starting at 5:31 PM.

Extended Care Program requires additional paperwork to be completed before students may be admitted into the program. Please contact Beth Corwin, Preschool Director, to obtain this paperwork.

1. **Purpose**

We believe God has created each student with unique gifts and abilities along with a desire to learn about His amazing world. It is our primary purpose to provide a supportive, Christian atmosphere where students are encouraged to learn and discover the potential that God has placed within each of them.

"I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way." Psalm 139:14

2. **Goals**

It is our goal to offer a quality preschool program to meet the individual needs of each student. Through the context of a nurturing, Bible-centered Christian environment we will provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences that will help each student grow spiritually, physically, cognitively and socially.

3. **Typical Daily Schedule**

7:30-8:00	Drop off
8:00-8:35	Table Activities/Specials**
8:35-8:45	Restroom Break
8:45-8:55	Bible/Circle Time
8:55-9:55	Centers
10:00-10:30	Snack Time/Restroom/prepare for recess
10:30-11:30	Recess (outdoors, in gym if inclement weather)
11:30-11:40	Restroom Break
11:40-12:10	Lunch
12:10-12:30	Restroom & Settle for Nap
12:30-2:00	Nap Time
2:00-2:30	Wake-up/Snack/Free Choice/Storytime
2:30-3:15	Pick-up

** Specials include Music, Spanish, and Library.

4. **Parent Participation**

We appreciate our parents very much and welcome your participation throughout the year. We ask that you allow time, at least a month, for your student to get settled into our routine before volunteering. When volunteering, we ask that no siblings attend, so that your full attention may be given to the activities at hand.

5. **Admission Criteria**

Below is a list of criteria that must be met before a student may start in our program:

- Students must be potty-trained to attend
- Application and copy of birth certificate
- Meeting with Administration
- Online enrollment completed
- Health form (filled out and signed by doctor)
- Child Information Record form and Good Health Statement
- Signed Written Information Packet Documentation
- Signed Permission to Apply OTC remedy/preventative
- Grace Christian School Financial Agreement form

6. **Payment, Refund, and Withdrawal Policies**

- If you notify the school prior to August 1st, you are no longer responsible for tuition. Application and Registration/ Placeholder fees are non-refundable.
- If the school is notified on or after August 1st, you are responsible for 75% of the first semester's tuition and the curriculum fee.
- If you withdraw after the first semester begins, you are responsible for the entire first semester's tuition.
- If you withdraw prior to the second semester, you will not be charged for the second semester's tuition.
- If you withdraw after the 2nd semester begins, you are responsible for the remainder of the year's tuition and fees.

7. **Absenteeism**

Call the main office (269-463-5545) if your student is going to be absent, late, or picked up early. If your student is absent due to illness, please give us a list of symptoms and any diagnoses so that we can document any contagious illness with the state.

8. **Arrival and Departure**

A parent or guardian must check their student in and out every. **No one may pick up your student unless they are listed on the Child Information card that parents fill out each year.** You may add or subtract names at any time. In an emergency, you may call and allow someone who is not on the card to pick up your student, but you will need to add the individual to the Child Information card as soon as possible. If the "authorized person" is unknown to us, we will ask him/her to provide appropriate picture identification.

9. ***Volunteer Screening Policy***

Volunteers will always be under the direct supervision of preschool employees and never left alone with a student. By law, volunteers are not allowed to handle blood or any potentially infectious bodily fluids and will not have unsupervised contact with the students unless they first have a background check performed. A statement will be signed/dated by volunteers indicating that he/she has been informed of our policy on student abuse and neglect, is aware that abuse and neglect of students is against the law and knows that they are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse/neglect to CPS. If a volunteer has contact with students at least 4 hours a week for more than 2 consecutive weeks they must have a recent TB test on file (within 1 yr.) to verify that he/she is free from communicable tuberculosis.

10. ***Abuse and Neglect Policy***

Grace Christian Preschool understands that child abuse/neglect is against the law and will not tolerate any activities that could be deemed as abusive or neglectful of any student. Staff members and volunteers who have acted in any way that is abusive or neglectful towards students will be reported to the state authorities and removed from employment or position as a volunteer.

Any employee or volunteer of Grace Christian School who has reasonable suspicion of child abuse/neglect is required by law to:

- Immediately report suspected abuse to Child Protective Services (CPS) of the county where the suspected abuse took place: Berrien: 269-934-2300, Cass: 269-382-4277, Van Buren: 269-621-2800. Reports can also be made online.
- **In addition**, every employee or volunteer has the responsibility to notify his/her supervisor of suspected child abuse and document the incident for the student's permanent file.

11. ***Birthday Celebration***

Birthdays are important, so we want to celebrate the special day! If your student has a birthday during the school year, parents are welcome to provide a special, nutritious snack for the whole class on or close to his/her special day. If your student has a summer birthday, contact the director about setting up a "half-birthday" date to celebrate. A list of student allergies is available as you prepare your snack.

12. ***Clothing***

Please dress your student in comfortable clothing that they can easily put on and take off themselves. Dress up/play clothing, such as costumes and pajamas, are not acceptable preschool wear. Please send 2 extra full sets of clothing in a Ziploc bag, a set for each warmer and colder weather that will be kept in their cubby in case of accidents. Please check periodically to make sure your student has extra clothing on hand. Students must have a pair of shoes that are kept at school and worn inside only (these are their “inside shoes”). These will be kept in their cubby and are to be put on when your student arrives each day. Whatever shoes your student wears to school that day will be the shoes they will wear outside for recess. Outside shoes should be safe for climbing and running. Keep in mind the weather because we play outside. Please send your student to school dressed for the weather.

13. ***Bedding***

Students have a naptime after lunch. Please provide a crib sheet and a small blanket. Your student may bring a special stuffed animal for naps, but no toys, please. We will provide a nap bag for students to store their bedding. Nap bags will go home at the end of each week so that the bedding can be washed and returned.

14. ***Discipline Policy***

Discipline is an important key to learning. Students find security when there are clear boundaries and expectations. We are a Christ-directed, student-centered Preschool. Each student will be disciplined with love using positive methods of correction. Students will be taught age appropriate expectations and consequences.

Inappropriate Behavior: The student is given a reminder of the appropriate behavior that is expected. We will re-direct the student and if the inappropriate behavior continues, a time-out may be given for an age-appropriate length of time. If the behavior continues after three attempts to correct the parent will be notified that day.

Between Students: When there are problems between students, we will give guidance, so they learn to work out their differences on their own by using appropriate words, sharing, and forgiving. Our goal is for students to learn self-governance and socially appropriate behavior and begin to understand that we all need God’s help to make good choices, we pray with them and teach them to pray. Students who pose a physical threat to themselves, other students or staff members may be asked to withdraw from the program.

15. Curriculum

We use the BJU Press curriculum, a Christian play-based learning program that nurtures learning through developmentally appropriate practices to meet the needs of each student individually. The centers in which the students are engaged are designed to reinforce developmental skills needed for further growth. We also use a Bible Curriculum daily to learn more about God as we grow.

16. Assessments and Observations

Students are observed throughout the year for developmental cues of school readiness. We often use anecdotal notes of these observations to discuss what the class as a whole, or majority, needs to work on more. This can lead to changes in our curriculum based on the students' needs. These notes are shared with parents at times if we are seeing issues in a student's development (i.e. misbehavior, developmental delay) so parents are able to help with students' development at home.

In addition to observations year round, we also conduct assessments at least twice a year—once in the fall and once in the spring. These assessments take a snapshot of where a student is developmentally and shows whether a student is ready for K4 in the fall of the next school year. These assessments also show the developmental growth of the student from fall to spring.

17. Students with Special Needs

Our community is comprised of many individuals, including those with special needs. Our program is capable of handling students with specific special needs to better support the families of our area. Our school also has a special education coordinator on site. We will accommodate students with special needs to the best of our abilities. At times parents of students with special needs will require extra communications to ensure their student is being properly attended while at school. These communications will be in private either by way of email, phone call, or in-person conversations. If a student is thought to have undiagnosed needs, we will discuss this in private with the parents of the student and direct the parents to the proper facility for testing.

18. ***Emergency Closing Policy***

If the school closes for inclement weather or other reasons, the school will utilize the Gradelink email and text system to inform parents. The Preschool Director may also send out an email to ensure receipt of the information. **Please make sure to keep your contact information current.**

19. ***Parent -Teacher Conferences***

We hold conferences twice a year, once during the scheduled Parent Teacher Conference day for the whole school, and once during the early spring (usually before Spring Break). These dates are marked on the calendar given at the beginning of the school year. The results of the student's assessments will be shared at these conferences, so attendance is highly suggested.

20. ***Food Allergies***

It is important to let us know if your student has any food allergies so that we can be sure your student will not be exposed to those foods while at school. The school staff undergoes training each year on policy and procedures regarding allergens and Epi-Pen use.

21. ***Lunches and Snacks***

Parents are responsible for providing a nutritious lunch, morning snack, and after nap snack each day for their student. We discourage sugary snacks as they typically have little nutritional value. Please send a water bottle with plain water for snack. They may have juice or milk for lunch. Lunches are available for purchase through the school lunch program. Please see the monthly lunch calendar for prices. Menus and payment are due the month before.

22. ***Transportation***

At times, Preschool will take educational field trips that coordinate with the curriculum. At these times, parents will be asked to transport students to and from these field trips. All drivers must fill out a Volunteer Certification for Field Trip Transportation form, even if the driver will only be transporting their own student. The requirements on this form are as follows:

- a. Seats cannot face sideways
- b. No loose or heavy objects may be in the vehicle
- c. Vehicles must be in safe operating condition

- d. Vehicles must meet Michigan vehicle code for safety equipment and a statement must be on file at the school
- e. A first aid kit must be in the vehicle and the driver must be familiar with the contents
- f. Each student must be in a booster seat or car seat that is appropriate for their age, height, and weight
- g. The driver and all passengers must use seatbelts
- h. The driver must be at least 18
- i. The driver must have a valid driver's license with no more than 6 points on their record
- j. The driver must have copies of the Child Information cards for the students in their vehicle
- k. Proof of insurance and valid vehicle registration are required to be on file
- l. Smoking and vaping are prohibited in vehicles or on field trips with student care students present
- m. You will need to agree to a statement that you are not an employee and your vehicle is not owned, leased by, or registered to the center or to a center employee.

A copy of your driver's license, registration, and insurance will need to be on file at the Preschool

23. Pesticide Management program

At this time Grace Christian School Preschool uses Rose Pest Solutions to provide a safe learning environment for our students. Rose Pest Solutions makes their application once a month. There is a detailed service report available in the classroom with information about the pesticide being used, the target pest, the purpose of application, approximate location, and date of application. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact the National Pesticide Information Center at 800-858-7378 or visit their website at www.npic.orst.edu. Additional information about pesticides may be obtained by contacting the National Poison Control Center at: 800-222-1212.

24. Teacher and Aide Training Policy

All staff members complete 16 clock hours of professional development annually on topics relevant to job responsibilities including an annual Health and Safety ongoing training sponsored by the Michigan Department of Education. This training also includes best practices for teaching, engaging, assessing, and disciplining students. Staff are also certified in infant, child, and adult CPR and First aid.

Health Care Policies and Resources

1. ***Hand washing before eating***

At the beginning of the year the students are instructed in the proper hand washing technique-using warm soapy water to clean the front and back of hands for 20 seconds and then drying completely. Guidelines for hand washing are posted by sinks. The students wash their hands before snack and lunch and after using the restroom.

2. ***Illness***

We will notify you if your student shows signs of illness while in our care. This would include symptoms such as a fever of 100 or higher, runny eye(s), unusual fatigue or irritability, vomiting, diarrhea, or sore throat. If your student is sick with a fever, diarrhea or vomiting he/she will be taken to the office where you will be notified to pick up your student. We will do our best to make your student comfortable until you arrive.

Guidelines for when your student should return to school:

- When a student has been fever-free for 24 hours **without medication**
- When a student has had antibiotics for 24 hours or more
- When a rash is diagnosed as non-contagious by a physician
- When diarrhea has stopped for 24 hours
- Scabies and lice must be cleared and nits completely gone
- Chicken pox lesions must be completely crusted over and healed

Please report contagious conditions such as pinworms, scabies, head lice, chicken pox or any undiagnosed rash to the director. The school is required to notify all parents of any communicable diseases.

3. ***Blood Borne Pathogen Procedure and Bodily Fluids***

All staff are required to have Blood Borne Pathogen training and are updated on health and safety annually in their required training. All precautions are taken to prevent anyone from coming in contact with bodily fluids from other people. When handling bodily fluids, staff wear proper PPE to properly dispose of the fluids to prevent others from coming in contact with the fluids. No student or volunteer is allowed to clean up and dispose of bodily fluids.

4. Medications

If a student requires medication during school hours, a Medication Permissions and Instructions form must be filled out. This include emergency medications, medications for an illness, or any daily prescriptions. This form must be filled out in full, including the name of the medication, the dates the medications will need to be given, the dosage, the times, storage instructions, and any other specific instructions. If a student has an emergency medication, such as an EpiPen, insulin, or a rescue inhaler, a form must still be filled out in full and we must have a unit that stays at the school full time (two EpiPens). Teachers will only administer prescription medications from original prescription containers with labels still intact. OTC medications/preventatives, such as acetaminophen, antibiotic cream, lip balm, sunscreen, insect repellent, and lotions will be given following the directions on the label. These medications must be in their unopened, original containers with labels intact.

5. Health Resources

- Berrien County Health Department: www.bchdmi.org
- American Association of Pediatricians: www.aap.org
- Kid's Health: www.kidshealth.org

Grace Christian School Preschool Emergency Procedures

Our Preschool Modular doors remain locked at all times. Video surveillance is in use around the campus. In order for someone to pick up a Preschool student during the school day, the parent must notify the school of the time, purpose, and person who is picking up or dropping off early. The doors are monitored during normal pick up and drop off times to allow parents access. We take the safety of our students very seriously and take all precautions necessary to ensure a safe environment. The preschool playground is enclosed within a fence to prevent students from wandering from the area.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

In the event a crisis should occur, the administration has created procedures to provide safety for all students. If a crisis is on-going and school needs to be cancelled, or if an evacuation of students is necessary, we will notify parents by utilizing the school's One Call system. Information may also be posted on TV websites.

TORNADO SAFETY

We are required by state to have 2 tornado drills a year-once in the fall and again in the spring. A map is posted by the classroom doors showing where classes are to go during a tornado or drill.

Drill:

1. Alarm sounds.
2. Lead Teacher: has the students line up at the door and leads them to the designated safe space.
3. Assistant Teacher: takes the attendance record, first aid kit, and flashlight, and closes the classroom door upon leaving.
4. The students will sit on the floor facing the wall with their hands folded behind their heads for protection.
5. Everyone remains in this position until the "all clear" is given by the principal.
6. Lead Teacher: leads the students back to class and discusses with them what they experienced.

FIRE SAFETY

We are required by the state to have at least one fire drill quarterly. A map is posted by the classroom doors showing where our class is to go during a fire drill.

Drill:

1. Alarms sounds.
2. Lead Teacher: has the students line up and leads them out of the building to the predetermined location.
3. Assistant Teacher: takes the attendance record and first aid kit and closes the classroom door upon leaving.
4. Lead Teacher: takes roll to account for all the students.
5. Teachers keep the students calm and quiet.
6. Lead Teacher: leads the students back to the classroom when the “all clear” is given by the principal and discusses what they experienced.

LOCKDOWN DRILL

In the event a dangerous person was suspected to be in or near the school building, the administration would initiate a lockdown. This drill is practiced at least twice during the school year.

Drill:

1. Alarm sounds and teachers are informed of the lockdown (internal or external)
2. Lead Teacher: assists students in sitting on the appropriate wall silently.
3. Assistant Teacher: closes the blinds, turns off the lights, locks the classroom door and makes sure the crisis bucket is accessible.
4. Teachers keep everyone calm until the principal unlocks the door and gives the “all clear”. Under no circumstances is the door to be opened by the teachers; the principal or designated person will unlock the door when it is safe.

CAMPUS EVACUATION

If it is determined that the school should be evacuated for the safety of the students, the same procedure for leaving the building in the fire drill will be followed. A bus will be outside the school entrance for the students to board. The Lead Teacher will lead the students onto the bus and be will be transported to one of 2 locations depending on the nature of the threat: Hartford Bible Church in Hartford, MI or Sister Lakes Community Church in Sister Lakes, MI.

SERIOUS ACCIDENTS: In the event of a serious illness or injury, the following plan will be followed:

1. Contact a staff member or Preschool Director for assistance.
2. One teacher attends to the injured student while another staff member attends to the other students.
3. If the injury is life threatening, call 911 immediately then the parent will be contacted.
4. If the injury is not life threatening, the parent will be called. If the parent is not available, the emergency contact on the Child Information card will be called. If that person is not available, the student's doctor will be contacted. If the doctor cannot be reached, the student will be taken to the emergency room.
5. If emergency medical care is needed, the parents will be held responsible for the fees incurred.
6. If the student needs to be sent to the hospital by ambulance, the director or designated staff will go to the hospital with the student.
7. The Preschool Director will make a verbal report to the DHS within 24 hours and a written report, using the appropriate forms within 72 hours and a copy will be kept on file.